

## **Global Network of NCSDs and Similar Bodies**

**First AGM, 20:00-21:30, Wednesday 9th April, Incheon, ROK**

### Agenda

- Welcome and introductions
- Current status of the network and key achievements to date
- Taking the Global Network forward - interactive discussion
  - What have representatives from NCSDs found most useful/helpful to date?
  - What would be the most useful/helpful activities for the Network to engage in next?
  - Stakeholder Forum's broad vision for moving forward and some ideas for new activities
- Defining the role of NCSDs in the design and the delivery of the SDGs
- Administration of the Network
  - Continued role and membership of the IAG
  - Continuation of SF as administrators
  - Ideas for new partnerships and fundraising
- AOB

### Participants

**Organisers:** Farooq Ullah (chair), and Jack Cornforth, Stakeholder Forum

Apologies and welcome note from International Advisory Group (IAG) Chair Derek Osborn (SF)

**IAG members:** Ella Antonio, Günther Bachmann, Loy Rego, Grażyna (Gina) Pulawska, Simon Hoiberg Olsen, Ingeborg Niestroy

Gábor Bartus, Livia Bizikova, Nuriani Dian, Aftab Durrani, Antoine Faye, Aretha Forde, Aboua Gustave, Peter King, Osman Mahomed, Chuthatip Maneepong, Sergii Marchencko, Harsha Meenawat, Gibson Mphepo, Katiana Murillo, Ronny Mustamu, László Pinter, Kenty Richardson, Darren Swanson, Jose Tenorio, Bishnu Tulsie, Marlet Wellington

### Meeting Notes

#### **Helping to strengthen existing councils**

- In several countries NCSDs have been set up, but which have not been particularly active/functional
  - Cote D'Ivoire representative stated that the GN could provide these bodies with specific capacity building assistance to address this issue
- Some options for support include:
  - The GN could provide info to specifically help councils that are in a state of flux to survive by learning from others, diversifying etc. We can help them build a case as to

why their council/body is important or why its role/activities should be diversified to make it more relevant/useful

- Twinning smaller/younger/less effective councils with bigger/older/more effective ones to help the development of the former
- Full training programmes on areas of management. BUT building capacity needs of the secretariats of councils, rather than the high level council members/ministers should be a priority
- Guidelines on the basic criteria for success/survival for Councils
- Need to empower NCSDs so they can play their role properly, especially in developing countries. Councils/countries need to balance technical ability/strategy with political appetite and nous – McKinsey example in Chad used to display dissonance between the two.
- Encouraging Councils to focus on holding governments to account on SDGs may be a risky approach, given that this could discourage them being supported politically

### **Improving information on councils**

- Günther Bachmann (IAG and German NCSD), is addressing private sector queries around sustainable cocoa growing in West Africa, palm oil in Indonesia, vanilla in Madagascar, waste exports to Senegal etc
  - A directory of local SD experts recommended by councils within each country could help with this – something the GN could help develop
- Scope the competencies and abilities of the personnel within NCSDs (with a view to developing specific capacity building/training programmes).
- In country workshops to determine: what is the current state of play regarding the NCSD, who are the key actors, key challenges to overcome etc. Governments should be included if possible

### **Communicating the value of NCSDs and the Network**

- Articulating the value of NCSDs remains a challenge. Perception that they are just a 'hammer looking for a nail' – we need to more clearly and practically articulate their benefits
  - This could range from somewhere between their broad role in post-2015 delivery to some very specific things such as identifying expert contacts etc. See German Werkstatt Network as an example perhaps
  - Publish, at the country level, how councils have and can make a further difference to SD
- Piece on a featured NCSD each month (NCSD of the month sort of thing)
- Need to take the conversation to the political level (rather than just technical), so that the value of councils is well known – and that they are supported - by decision makers at the highest level

- Globally, a certain level of political awareness of the value and importance of councils seems to exist. So then why are they being shelved? There must be a gap in what they are expected to deliver and what they have been doing in practice.
- We need to analyse failures and come up with an agenda (for governance) that can add value to existing structures, to counter views that NCSDs will be politically restrictive or a bureaucratic drag.
- Link to governance and Mol is key – specifically for the SDGs
  - This is the big opportunity moment for NCSDs
  - Many strategies get developed, however these are often primarily responding to external pressures (WB, UNDP etc) in the promise of receiving funds. We need countries to own the strategies more – post-2015 will do this, but we need to clearly articulate how helpful and important NCSDs can be to facilitate this process.
  - Countries that don't have NCSDs need to be shown that they are missing a trick (in terms of being able to deliver the SDGs etc) if they don't have an effective NCSD
  - Mol discussion at the global/UN level needs to include the value and role of NCSDs
- Green climate fund assesses national readiness for climate adaptation etc. The GN could work with the UN to assess whether countries are ready to deliver post-2015 (in terms of governance arrangements – i.e. NCSDs).
- 'Vertical alignment' can be too abstract of a concept – it's important but we need to think about specific **products** that NCSDs can own with more legitimacy than other bodies/national level actors. Possible products include:
  - Monitoring and reporting national level progress towards reaching SDGs
  - Peer review procedures. Could the German SD Council peer review methodology be captured by the GN and offered to new countries.
  - Ethics code for companies – Greece adopted an approach based upon to the German NCSD's German Sustainability Code for example.

#### **Possible new functions/initiative to help NCSDs engage in**

- Cross-sectoral policy development, helping to avoid ministries going it alone in silos/bickering, etc.
- Explore whether/when the UN High Level Political Forum (HLPF) on SD is thinking about national level planning and implementation, including creating relationships with the NCSDs- can the Global Network link into this work? For example:
  - As key actors involved in the scrutiny of the SDGs at the national level?
  - Have all countries started committing to revising their NSDSs in light of Post-2015 and the SDGs?

## Summary of potential roles and actions for the GN to take forward

- Promote multi-stakeholder approaches. There is a need to explore/specify exactly how this can be done.
- Shine the light on 'blackspots' where NCSDs do not exist (in addition to existing good examples/practices)
- Identify and promote the multiple different NCSD 'products' (making the political sell)
- Provide capacity building and training to Councils
- Enhance engagement between NCSDs and for NCSDs in the intergovernmental process
  - through twinning (former) and engaging with HLPF and other UN structures (latter) perhaps
- Promote the role/value of NCSDs in raising political awareness about SD, including at the international level.

## Governance and administration

- **Vision** – Enhance the initiative from being a passive network to an active community of practice that individuals use regularly and without prompting/chasing from SF as administrators
  - Could develop some form of charter or vision statement, as well as a clearer description of the governance structure (i.e. facilitators, IAG members, council members, etc.)
- Need to retain focus on the stakeholder engagement/multi-stakeholder element of NCSDs as this is what makes them different from government SD actors
  - this should be captured in the Network's proposed charter
- SF as administrators of the Network expressed a desire to strengthen and formalise partnerships for the governance of the Network – SDplanNet highlighted as a key similar network in this regard
  - Could we (continue to) collaborate on the likes of communications efforts, meetings and events, fundraising etc.?
  - Could try to regionalise the network a little, perhaps pinning it to SDplanNet's regional structures. This will make it more manageable and see people more likely to engage.
- 'Focal point for SD' could be better wording than 'NCSDs and similar bodies' as this could be too specific and outdated in today's world
  - IAG to discuss this and come up with recommendation – SF to coordinate discussion immediately after SDTF
- SF to revitalise the advisory Group with a ToR, concept note for next steps etc.
  - Need to push for greater inclusion of actual NCSD members on IAG

### **General updates and info**

- UNEP project in Asia to create 15 NSDSs (ask Loy Rego of the IAG for details)
- Bangladesh about to form a new council apparently (need to confirm this with Madiful Islam, national rep present at SDTF)
- NCSD of Montenegro recently re-mandated
- Croatian government considering new/bringing back? their council (check SDGs survey response to confirm)