

## THE IMPORTANCE OF PARTICIPATION AS A MEAN TO IMPLEMENT THE POST-2015 AGENDA

Dear chairs

I come from Chile, and I'm the president of the Chilean NGO platform ACCION and coordinator of the main Latin-American NGO platform, Mesa de Articulación.

I'm speaking here on behalf of Beyond 2015 - a global coalition with over 1200 members in more than 140 countries and we believe that people's participation, in all its diversity, is central to the new global development agenda.

In the context of the post-2015 agenda, participation has multiple dimensions. It can be viewed as a target -in goal 16 on peaceful societies-, but also as an essential Mean of Implementation and an integral element of the follow up and review mechanism that will be put in place. It is very important for us to assert the importance of people's participation in the specific context of the Means of implementation, but first it's essential to spell out what the concept of implementation entails within the context of the post-2015 agenda.

We believe the implementation of the post-2015 agenda is constituted by two different albeit intimately linked phases. Firstly, there is the decision-making process that will aim to translate the agenda at the national level, preparing the path to national action on the different components of the agenda, keeping in mind the principle of integration between sustainable development pillars, as well as the ultimate aim of leaving no one behind. Within this decision-making process, we believe it's crucial that the mechanisms put in place at the national, subnational and local levels take into account the need for participation of people and their organizations, as it is included in target 16.7: ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels.

In this context building the SDGs into national and local development plans or strategies and creating cross-sectoral ministerial committees help to gather political will, --and the financial resources- for the actual implementation, as well as enhancing coherence and integration. The participatory quality of these mechanisms is key to make the planning and the implementation people-centered, transparent and sensitive to environmental stewardship from the outset, and thus to bring about a truly transformative agenda.

For a renewed equation between state, people, economy and the planet, and for development to become a real enabler for social change, an overhaul of our political institutions and the way they operate and interact with society as a whole is really needed, and it cannot be done if there aren't any venues created for greater participation. In the spirit of a human-rights approach to development people and their organizations have to be integrated into any governance system for it to be fully legitimate and democratic. The time has come for participation to be fully built into our institutions, in

order to complement representative democracy, specially when the representativity is flawed for one reason or another.

The challenge is thus to make that the ideals of integration, participation and inclusiveness are not only respected, but asserted in the most ambitious way when the SDGs are translated in national action plans.

In chronological order, the second step to implementation of the post-2015 agenda is the actual application of the plans and strategies in the field. This implies the formulation, selection and implementation of specific and -hopefully- cross-cutting projects that will seek to fulfill the SDGs built into national and local development plans. This phase is linked to target 17.17 encourage and promote effective public, public-private, and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships.

Even though every governance system requires trade-offs between openness and institutional power, there are mechanisms to be found that can harness the potential of people's capacities in bringing about change, and the actual implementation of the post-2015 agenda is a significant opportunity in this path.

The idea would be to move beyond traditional approaches based on isolated and specific best practices, which are valuable in their own right, but often fall short of addressing issues of coherency and coordination between different components of the agenda or between different actors. A holistic conception of the role of people and their organizations as actors of development can be built into every level of the implementation structures put in place, constituting a system that allows for interaction and coordination between different levels of government and different actors :

- At the local, subnational and national levels, structures for participatory implementation should be established. This should be done with a view to provide enough space for governments and civil society to engage in dialogue and build consensus around a set of guidelines for the formulation and selection of the best projects that can be put in place for the fulfillment of the different Sustainable Development Goals and targets that have been built into national and local development plans. These spaces should be horizontal, and ideally, the decisions made in there should be binding. These spaces could also provide a venue for monitoring and accountability to take place once the projects start being translated into action.
- At the regional and local levels, participatory budgets can be put in place, in order to legitimize the resource- allocation process for the components of the agenda that fall into the competency of regional and local authorities. These processes should take into account the principle of integration, and should be applied to projects that tackle the different components of the agenda in harmony, and specially the ones that properly address the links between environmental stewardship and human development.

- These spaces must incorporate approaches that tackle the discriminatory social norms and practices that continue to subordinate women and girls in public and private life, and exclude them from the realisation of their rights.
- People and their organizations should be included in the actual implementation of the different cross-cutting projects that are formulated for the fulfillment of the agenda. Also, Member States must allocate funds to increase the capacity of people and their organisations to support the implementation and monitoring of the post-2015 agenda, including holding their governments to account. Member States must enhance international support for implementing effective and targeted capacity building in developing countries to support multi-stakeholder initiatives that inform national plans to implement all sustainable goals and targets.

In conclusion, for the post-2015 agenda to become more than an aspirational paper agreement and to make a real difference to people's lives, governments must start putting in place strategies, institutional plans and mechanisms at the national and local level to ensure participatory implementation.

Governance structures for decision-making and implementation should account for the integral and transformative nature of the SDGs, promoting coherence, inclusiveness and participation. While governments have the primary responsibility for the implementation of the post-2015 agenda, they must recognise that this agenda goes far beyond government. It is a shared agenda - it is our agenda. As such, people and their organisations must be involved in the implementation process right from the start. They must be included on political commissions, on groups developing sustainable development plans and budgets. Without this level of participation, it will take much longer to embed the post-2015 agenda at the local and national level.