

HLPF 2019: Civil Society Organizations come together to advocate for an ambitious review of the High-level Political Forum

In recent months, a group of major global civil society networks including [Forus](#), [Action for Sustainable Development \(A4SD\)](#), [Together 2030](#) and the [TAP network](#) have reached out to their members and other civil society organisations at national, regional and global levels to gather their views on the upcoming HLPF review. This review will be launched by UN Member States in 2019. An official UN side event [“Renewing the ambition of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: Civil Society perspectives on Principles for a successful HLPF review”](#) has been organised by these CSO networks. The side event will be held on July 11, 2019 to present the common recommendations of these major civil society networks.



New-York – July 11, 2019 - Civil Society is calling for the format and functioning of the High-level Political Forum (HLPF) to be reviewed and adjusted in the interests of promoting greater multi-stakeholder involvement in the largely state-led HLPF processes that currently take place. According to Iara Pietricovsky, Chairperson of the global civil society network Forus, the format of the global HLPF at present includes an annual meeting held in the UN’s Headquarters under

the auspices of its Economic and Social Council for eight days. “Civil society currently occupies an observer role in HLPF processes rather than being a full participant” she says.

The **High-level Political Forum** is the United Nations (UN) central platform for follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Forum provides for the “full and effective participation of all States Members of the United Nations and States members of specialized agencies”. (*UNGA Resolution 67/290*). The establishment of the UN High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) was mandated in 2012 by the outcome document of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), “*The Future We Want*”.

However, Civil Society Organizations claim that the HLPF as it is constituted and functions at present is **state-led and state-centered**. This is despite the SDG’s emphasis on the centrality of a multi-stakeholder approach to SDG monitoring, review and implementation.

As a result, four major Civil Society Organizations [Forus](#), [Action for Sustainable Development \(A4SD\)](#), [Together 2030](#) and the [TAP network](#) have organised an official UN side event to present their “[Principles Paper](#)” with high-level messages that these organisations have developed with regard to the official UN HLPF Review to be launched this year. The aim of the side event is to try to influence the position of the UN and its member states in advance of the official HLPF Review being initiated.

The side event of **July 12**, will see these organisations advocating for an in-depth reform of the format and functioning of the HLPF so that its processes will help to achieve the full potential of the SDGs.

According Forus and its members, the official UN review of the HLPF must:

- **Be inclusive and transparent;**
- **Ensure more meaningful and effective participation by civil society in next HLPF cycle;**
- **Achieve fundamental reforms to the format and functioning of HLPF for its next four-year cycle (2020-2023);**
- **Ensure that the HLPF becomes more policy-oriented.**

Moreover, these organisations are calling for the HLPF review to be multi-level in its approach and to assess how effective national, regional and global level review processes linked to the SDGs are. For civil society, the HLPF 2019 review represents a significant opportunity to improve the interconnected nature of SDG reviews and to ensure that peer learning can take place.

Civil society is also calling for the activities of the HLPF to go beyond review and to create spaces for much more in-depth policy discussions by all stakeholders. They have called for UN Member States to be supported in accessing clear policy guidance and support in target-setting during the HLPF so that they can achieve greater sustainability across different policy areas at national and regional levels.

Other civil society demands include:

- Strengthened multi-stakeholder involvement in the HLPF, including civil society;
- More effective Voluntary National Review (VNR) processes at the national level;
- More policy discussions and processes within the HLPF that will support and steer changes in policy direction by the UN Member States;
- Greater strengthening of accountability mechanisms within the HLPF;
- A stronger focus on human rights to be incorporated into HLPF monitoring, review and reporting;
- More focus on challenges facing most vulnerable countries in implementing the SDGs;
- A strengthened secretariat for the HLPF.

More information on the joint Principles Paper on HLPF Review: <https://bit.ly/2K8G5yt>

[See the Forus Position Paper on HLPF Review here](#)

To attend the event:

*Renewing the ambition of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development - Civil Society perspectives on Principles for a successful HLPF review will take place in **Conference room 1 at the UN Headquarters from 1:15-2:45pm on Thursday July 11th.***

About Forus

Forus, previously known as the International Forum of National NGO Platforms (IFP/FIP), is a member-led network of 69 National NGO Platforms and 7 Regional Coalitions from all continents representing over 22,000 NGOs active locally and internationally on development, human rights and environmental issues. <http://forus-international.org>

For further information, please contact:

Sanaâ Nadir – Communication officer – sanaa@forus-international.org/+ 27 73 610 78 59

Acronyms/abbreviations:

*The 2019 **High Level Political Forum (HLPF)** will be taking place on 9 – 18 July. This year, SDGs 4, 8, 10, 13, 16 and 17 are under review; and 47 countries will submit their Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs). We are now four years into the 2030 Agenda but we know that governments reporting at the VNRs have provided very mixed pictures of progress. We are also aware that civil society involvement has also been patchy so far, despite an official commitment to engaging them fully in the review of progress. Forus will be organizing several events to strengthen these areas well as promoting [a review of HLPF and its engagement mechanisms](#).*

** **2030 Agenda** - This Agenda is a plan of action for people, planet and prosperity. It seeks to strengthen universal peace in larger freedom. All countries and all stakeholders, acting in collaborative partnership, will implement this plan. The 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 targets of this new universal Agenda seek to build on the Millennium Development Goals and complete what they did not achieve. They seek to realize the human rights of all and to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. They are integrated and indivisible and balance the three dimensions of sustainable development: the economic, social and environmental. The Goals and targets will stimulate action over the next 15 years in areas of critical importance for humanity and the planet. <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/development-agenda/>*

** **CSOs**, Civil Society Organisations.*

*** **SDGs**, Sustainable Development Goals - The Sustainable Development Goals are a call for action by all countries to promote prosperity while protecting the planet. They recognize that ending poverty must go hand-in-hand with strategies that build economic growth and address a range of social needs including education, health, social protection, and job opportunities, while tackling climate change and environmental protection. The 17 Sustainable Development Goals address the global challenges we face, including those related to poverty, inequality, climate, environmental degradation, prosperity, and peace and justice. The Goals interconnect and in order to leave no one behind, it is important that we achieve each Goal and target by 2030. <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>*

** **VNRs, Voluntary National Reviews** - The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development encourages member states to "conduct regular and inclusive reviews of progress at the national and sub-national levels, which are country-led and country-driven". The voluntary national reviews are expected to serve as a basis for the regular reviews by the high-level political forum (HLPF), meeting under the auspices of ECOSOC. The national reviews aim to facilitate the sharing of experiences, including successes, challenges and lessons learned, with a view to accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The VNRs also seek to strengthen policies and institutions of governments and to mobilize multi-stakeholder support and partnerships for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/vnrs/>*