

Ensuring that no one is left behind

2016 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF 2016)

11-20 July 2016, New York



The HLPF is the central platform for the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The 2016 meeting of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF 2016), under the auspices of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), focused on the theme of ‘Ensuring that no one is left behind.’ The HLPF is the central platform for the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The HLPF 2016 was attended by nearly 1500 Member States, Major Groups and other stakeholders (MGoS), and intergovernmental and UN organisations. In addition to the official programme, 37 side events were organised.

The first week of the meeting provided a space for Member States, UN agencies, Major Groups and other stakeholders to exchange experiences and lessons learnt and hold interactive discussions leading to political guidance and recommendations. Moderated dialogues were held on topics such as - Where do we stand at year one; Envisioning an inclusive world in 2030; Lifting people out of poverty and addressing basic needs; Fostering economic growth, prosperity, and sustainability; Food security and sustainable agriculture, climate action, sustainable oceans and terrestrial ecosystems; and Creating peaceful and more inclusive societies and empowering women and girls.

The HLPF Ministerial Segment, which convened from 18-20 July, was addressed by heads of government and by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. Sessions took place on main messages from the first HLPF week: our starting point, and on topics related to the meeting’s theme of “ensuring that no one is left behind,” including: Reaching the most vulnerable; Challenges of countries in special situations; Unlocking Means of Implementation (MOI) for SDGs and creating an enabling environment; and Prospects for the future (Projections, scenarios and new and emerging issues). In addition, five sessions focused on the first round of Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) on implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, and a general debate took place every afternoon during the Ministerial Segment.



Civil society was well represented in the HLPF activities and side events. The Asia Pacific Regional C SO Engagement Mechanism (APRCM) was also actively involved in the HLPF activities, with several APRCEM members participating as C SO speakers in the different events.

A [Ministerial Declaration](#), focusing on the meeting’s theme, was adopted during the closing session.

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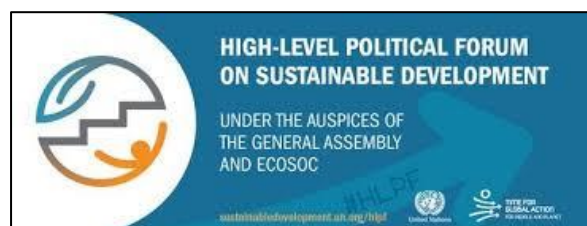
Civil society organisations offered recommendations on how to better enhance the conduct of succeeding HLPF s in the coming years in a letter addressed to the President of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

In the main, civil society was well represented in the High level Political Forum activities and side events. The newly formed Education and Academia Stakeholder Group jointly convened by the Global Campaign for Education (GCE), the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE), Education International (EI) and the European Students Union organised a side event on Inclusive and Equitable Education on 11 July, in cooperation with the Stakeholder Group on People with Disabilities and with the Global Education Monitoring Report (a detailed report on this event is featured in ICAE's [Voice Rising Issue 495](#)).

The Asia Pacific Regional CSO Engagement Mechanism (APRCM) was also actively involved in the HLPF activities, with several APRCEM members participating as CSO speakers in the different events.

Civil society representatives in the HLPF however were disappointed by the modalities for negotiation and civil society participation in the official processes of the HLPF, notably in the Ministerial segment of the HLPF and the presentations of National Voluntary Reviews. Civil society organisations participating in the HLPF mainly through the Major Groups and Stakeholders mechanism offered recommendations on how to better enhance the conduct of succeeding HLPFs in the coming years in a letter addressed to the President of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). In the main, they recommended:

- “..that the HLPF programme in 2017 and in forthcoming years should begin with the Ministerial Segment where member states conduct their reviews and adopt the ministerial declaration, followed by the expert level thematic roundtables and dialogues. This would allow the discussions taking place at the expert level to be informed by inputs from the national reviews.”
- “The modalities for the HLPF in general - and especially the reviews of national voluntary reports at the global level - should encourage interactive dialogue and debate. More time should be given for member states to engage with each country report, with inputs from major groups and other stakeholders.”
- “The HLPF rests upon - and should aim to reinforce - national democratic ownership of the reporting frameworks by all stakeholders. National review processes need to be strengthened to be more inclusive, transparent, effective,



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and participatory, as well as better able to capture successes and learnings, and to make corrective adjustments, when necessary.”

- “National reviews should make the best use of already available information, including data from other UN reporting mechanisms as well as inputs from thematic experts. Additional sources of information like parallel reports should also be considered as inputs and made available on the HLPF website as part of review materials for the respective country. “
- “Moreover, the UN secretariat could request member states to volunteer to conduct national voluntary reviews over the next 4-year cycle, creating a schedule that facilitates better preparation.”

The full text of the Letter to the President of the UN ECOSOC can be accessed [here](#).

Anjela Taneja, GCE’s Head of Policy, prepared an [assessment](#) of the National Voluntary reviews from an education lens as part of the preparations for the HLPF and to assist in the lobbying effort. It offers a useful reference document and aid for campaigning in future SDG follow up processes.

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