

Kenyan CSO's Breakfast Meeting to Develop Consensus on a Common Position on the SDGs and Post 2015 Development Agenda

11th September 2014: Venue: Silver Springs Hotel, Nairobi

Introduction

Over 70 Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in Kenya come together to consolidate views and recommendations' to the Government of Kenya on 11th September 2014. The Kenyan Government was in the process of finalizing on its Common Position on the Post 2015 Development Agenda in readiness for the debate and adoption of the proposed Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) held during the 69th United Nations General Assembly in New York. Through the Ministry of Devolution and Planning (MDGs Unit) CSOs had been encouraged to consolidate views and recommendations' as a critical document for engagement with the Government of Kenya, Development Partners, other UN Member states and the wider Civil Society platform globally.

The meeting was well attended with diverse representation as the organizers' sought to Leave no one behind.

A Reflection on the CSOs process on the Post 2015 Development Agenda, Regionally, Globally- Salina Sanou (ACORD)

The process has been marked by regional collaborations of various CSOs in Africa who came together to offer support to President Sirleaf Johnson in Liberia in the building of a new framework that included the people's voice through the CSOs especially that of rural women.

In October, Helpage, FEMNET and other CSOs across the continent formed a secretariat for the High Level Panel which assisted in the incorporation of CSO language in the Panel's goals through collaboration with the private sector, academia, government and other stakeholders.

During the 21st Ordinary session, High Level Committee (HLC) was set up to develop the Common African Position (CAP). HLC will function till 2015 and

1. West Africa- Liberia(Chair), Guinea
2. Central Africa- Congo and Chad
3. Eastern Africa- Ethiopia and Mauritius
4. North Africa- Algeria and Mauritania
5. Southern Africa- South Africa and Namibia

CAP reflects the aspirations of the African people and contains seven main strategic key messages, which are; the commitment of Africa to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) specially focusing on the areas of health and education, a sustainable agenda of development, the acknowledgment of the need for peace and security among others. CAP reflects the aspirations of the African people and contains seven main strategic key messages, which are; the commitment of Africa to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) specially focusing on the areas of health and education, a sustainable agenda of development, the acknowledgment of the need for peace and security among others.

During the Open Working Group's 6th Session that was chaired by Macharia Kamau, gender issues were highlighted and different issues were discussed within the 13 Sessions that constitute the 17 Goals that will be implemented nationally and globally.

The goals, issues, targets and indicators were discussed in regards to the people and how the SDGs will be implemented locally and globally including issues considered too sensitive by governments e.g. gender issues such as LGBT rights

A Reflection on the Kenyan CSOs and Government Process on the Post 2015 Development Agenda- Mwangi Waituru (SEED Institute)

In regards to the Post 2015 2015 Development Agenda, the power points are fragmented; there are various issues and the government has various ministries and departments to deal with them e.g. the Rio Agenda is catered to by the Ministry of Environment

Mwangi highlighted the following as important power points CSOs need to be aware of and need to constantly engage.

1. The Kenyan Mission drives post 2015 Development Agenda processes to the UN in New York in terms of negotiations. The delegates lobby the agenda issues through consultation with other government ministries. He noted that the delegates have passionately represented Kenya's interest challenging the CSOs in Kenya to do the same.
2. The Embassy of Foreign Affairs is also a key player and drives these agendas issues through political space.

3. The MDGs are catered to by the Ministry of Devolution and Planning which acts as the central coordination point of development agenda in Kenya. In relation to post 2015 development agenda, this ministry has actively spearheaded the Kenyan process locally. For instance the MDGs Unit gathered the views of the people and facilitated dialogues in the counties together with the Civil Society Organizations'. CSOs also sent position papers to the Ministry of Planning from the dialogue sessions.

There has been a deliberate effort to put local issues in the SDGs through efforts between the government and CSOs. Global CSOs are a platform for growth agenda and the private sector is not only a partner in growth development, but leadership as well. The role of the CSOs when working with the government on the Post 2015 Development Agenda is to ensure that there is participation by the people and that pertinent issues are discussed and tackled.

Further, Mwangi noted that the challenges the government is facing when working on development agenda are the aspect of economic growth and ensuring that it is in favour of the people. During the Maanzoni meeting, there was cooperation between the government, CSO and other stakeholders that resulted in the need for establishing a common position on the SDGs and Post 2015 Development Agenda by the CSOs.

There is a need for government departments working on various SDG issues to collaborate in order to achieve them; CSOs are also encouraged to do this and work with the government towards achieving a successful development Agenda. This may be done through maintaining commitment in addressing the poverty agenda and not only making the process pro-poor, but also facilitate the participation of citizens through all forms possible.

The government has open spaces for communication with the CSOs and the onus is on the CSOs to provide useful information to the government as part of the collaboration process.

In conclusion, Mwangi highlighted that limitations within the UNGA may hinder the achievement of much in terms of the SDGs although it is a platform for CSOs to offer reaction to inform the stakeholders on the issues and information CSOs have come up with.

Comments

There is need to analyze how CSOs and the government will involve the people in the implementation of the SDGs and the debate on the Post 2015 Development Agenda as this will establish the CSOs' position in the Agenda debate.

The issue of the use of 'poor people' as a term in terms of the SDG debate instead of using the term 'living in poverty' as a better alternative in order to highlight the environment these people are in and the factors that contribute to their situation.

Participants felt that it is time to start implementing the next development agenda at county level through partnership among, citizen, the local government and CSOs. This is important although accessing government channels for dialogue is a challenge and sometimes the government is not cooperative.

Participants noted that the level of involvement by the county government in the SDGs needs to be defined and the need to strengthen the SDG debate with the government in terms of policy implementation, monitoring and evaluation in order to encourage citizen engagement; policy and resources are key in achieving this.

CSOs need to consider who they are representing; people living in poverty throughout the Agenda debate and consider how the indicators for the SDGs will be implemented at the county level and nationally. For this to happen, the CSOs need to be knowledgeable on county issues and international issues as well. Citizen engagement at the grassroots level is ongoing and there is need for them to collaborate with the CSOs and government to meet the SDGs.

Comments/Inputs on the proposed Sustainable Development Goals- Felogene Anumo (FEMNET)

Felogene introduced the draft CSOs common Position to participants for discussion and further inputs. Reactions from the floor included that the document needs to acknowledge the work done by the High Level Panel, Common African Position and other CSOs and stakeholders in the post 2015 development agenda process. CSOs need to analyze the goals and positions taken by other actors on the SDG Agenda and focus on what they would like to achieve; lobbying, platform for views among others.

The target audience for the document was identified as the government for the following reasons;

- The proximity of the government as an audience contributes to its suitability
- CSOs need to consolidate the Kenyan Government's position in order to facilitate collaboration
- Through the government, the document will reach a wider audience; private sector, interest groups, etc.
- The position document will provide an opportunity to air the CSO voice through the government during the UNGA meeting

- The government may use the CSO language from the position document when debating the Agenda at the UNGA meeting
- Partnering with the government on the agenda through the position document will ensure the government's cooperation in working with CSOs in implementing the agenda and achieving its goals

A smaller group may need to be formed to assist in editing the position document further in regards to the additional input and if need be work with the government in refining it. This because there is hesitance on the government's part on the further development of the SDG document prompting it to prefer its current state, although there is room for its improvement through the strengthening or benchmarking of some of the indicated issues.

Specific Recommendations

1. Issue of justice has been omitted from the document and needs to be considered.
2. In regards to section 7, there is a current global occurrence of conflict and violence that may weaken this aspect of the agenda.
3. People with disabilities issues need to be well defined in the document as the phrase 'people of all ages and abilities' or 'all people' does not sufficiently capture disability issues that are unique to their situation and excludes them from the agenda.
4. Section 9; peaceful societies and governance has been put into one goal and they need to be separated as governance issues go beyond conflict and cover other elements such as corruption.

5. Feel that corruption has been omitted from the document, although it has been covered by 'illicit financial flows'.
6. Nutrition and food security are not well captured in the position document; nutrition runs throughout the human life cycle while malnutrition only affects children under 5years. Tackling under-nutrition globally is being looked at as an education issue and so scaling up the nutrition management could also be another way to highlight the issue.
7. Freedom of the press and the rights of media and CSOs is not highlighted in the document and it is an issue experienced both locally and globally.
8. The position paper should consider and indicate all the vulnerable groups as they are indicated in the Kenyan constitution.
9. Section 7 and 8; the issue of violence targets women, children and the elderly and there is need to emphasize this.
10. Section 10; should clearly indicate how this data can be acquired in relation to the special groups e.g. accessing data on water access by persons with disabilities is hard to come by
11. CSOs need to identify how the issue of terrorism may be incorporated into the position document
12. The rights of children in the document need to go beyond nutrition in order to allow them to access other opportunities.
13. The section covering forms of violence does not cover the elimination of forced tradition practices which are harmful such as FGM and forced marriage should be highlighted

14. Gender equality and empowerment in the document caters to girls and women leaving the boy child vulnerable and this goal needs to be amended to include the boy child's needs

Consolidation and Ratification of the CSOs Common Position- Don Bonyo (World Vision Kenya)

Bonyo offered insight on how best to utilize the CSOs Common Position during and after UNGA. He noted that KEWOPA (that was represented) volunteered to take the position document before the Parliamentary delegation that will go to the UNGA as they are also part of the delegation going for the meeting.

He encouraged identification of other CSOs attending UNGA in their own capacity to ensure that the position document will also be represented at the meeting from the CSOs point of view and for a large CSOs delegation championing our agenda.

There is need to engage more CSOs in the agenda debate and implementation in future. There is space for partnership between CSOs for the refining of the document before its submission to the government and circulation to other CSOs and stakeholders

The final statement should be shared with other CSOs locally and internationally to foster partnership with them as well as the government when adopting it

The input from the meeting will be coopted into the document before its submission to KEWOPA on Monday in order to determine the way forward as it will be submitted to the Parliamentary delegation on Wednesday before they depart for UNGA.

Action points/ Way forward- Florence Syevuo (GCAP)

On the way forward, Florence offered a few strategies that the planning committee was exploring and asked participating organizations to offer further input so as to have a well coordinated and inclusive CSOs platform on the Post 2015 development process.

As an action point, those participants present attending UNGA from various CSOs will partner with the organizing committee on the way forward to contribute and finalize formulation of a well detailed position paper for lobbying during UNGA.

Moving forward more needs to be done in achieving the Post 2015 Development Agenda as CSOs, for instance, the planning committee is currently exploring ways to convene a parliamentary meeting on tackling issues in regards to existing policies and on preparation of the post 2015 development agenda.

CSOs need to constantly be updated and identify common positions to facilitate collaboration in order to achieve progress in the next development agenda .The government and the grassroots are major partners that CSOs need to pursue through out our work. CSOs from different sectors also need to communicate ideas and activities that may facilitate collaboration and offer need to offer expertise for accelerated development to be achieved .