**HLPF 2018: "Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies"**

**Presentation: "How far have we come with the Sustainable Development Goals?"**

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**1.- What is the interconnection between the thematic SDGs for this 2018 Forum?**

The 2030 Agenda is a powerful instrument to "leave no one behind".

The Secretary General of the United Nations has warned that "Implementation has begun, but the clock is ticking " (Report of the Sustainable Development Goals, July 17, 2017, UN).

As beings that live in society, we are powerfully interested in cities and human settlements being inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable (SDG 11).

At present we have made the leap of talking about smart city that The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) conceptualizes as "An innovative city that uses information and communication technologies (ICTs) and other means to improve quality of life, efficiency of urban operation and services, and competitiveness, while ensuring that it meets the needs of present and future generations with respect to economic, social, environmental as well as cultural aspects"[[1]](#footnote-1).

I would like to point out that for a real intelligence of cities in the 21st century, human diversity must be considered as a key factor, whose differences are not only socio - economic. Otherwise we run the risk that the 2030 Agenda show very remarkable results, but with a sustainable development that does not reach all.

For this reason, there is great hope that the 2030 Agenda will make cities and human settlements inclusive in terms of universal accessibility. This means understanding the needs of our diverse, dynamic, interactive and evolving humanity. Therefore, it is essential to make visible that a goal not written in the Agenda is the universal design and accessibility of cities and human settlements, not only in relation to the physical space, but also in terms of information, communications, transport, technology, the procedures, products and services. This also reaches inclusive and accessible reconstruction after a natural disaster.

Intelligent city technology feeds on energy and responds to patterns of production and consumption whose challenge will also be universal accessibility and therefore applicable to SDG 7 and SDG 12.

The "achievements of modernity", in the terms indicated, should be a real horizon for the life of all persons, contributing to their concrete autonomy and independence, without becoming a barrier, for their full and effective inclusion in society. In this sense, we must remember persons with disabilities, the older persons and other sectors of the population.

On the other hand, we appreciate the connection between SDG 6 and SDG 15, which are vital supports for compliance with SDG 11. Without water and with degradation of the ecosystem, we can not think of any type of human settlement or sustainable and resilient city.

**2.- "How far have we come with the Sustainable Development Goals?"**

Three years after the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, it is premature to make exhaustive diagnoses, such as pointing out at this moment that the goals can not be fulfilled. However, with the experience of implementation in these three years, we can make an initial prospective highlighting strengths and identifying weaknesses.

**2.1 Strengths of implementation and supervision**

**a- Commitment of the States**

**At an international level**, these three years of revision add up to 103 member states that have submitted to the National Voluntary Review, which represents more than 50% of the countries that make up the United Nations, which shows a strong commitment from Member States. The Voluntary National Reviews totaliza 113 (22 countries in 2016, 43 countries in 2017 and 48 countries in 2018).

**b.- Trust**

The 2017 HLPF Report noted that 100 countries have already asked the UN for their support and assistance for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda at the national level, which reflects their confidence in the process and the system.

This confidence is also reflected in the decision to address the interconnections between the SDGs and their integrated nature.

**c.- The exchange space**

The HLPF provides a global space where governments, local authorities, civil society, private sector, academia, the scientific and technological community and others can all come together to share and exchange their experiences on implementing the transformative SDGs[[2]](#footnote-2).

**2.2 Detected weaknesses that persist in the implementation or supervision**

**In essence**, more than 767 million persons continue living on less than US $ 1.90 per day, with many of the extreme poor concentrated in fragile settings, where conflict and other systemic issues hamper effective interventions, which constitutes difficulty in fact[[3]](#footnote-3). The lack of social inclusion and the increase in inequality continue to be an important barrier, both within and between countries[[4]](#footnote-4).

In particular, young persons, indigenous persons, older persons, rural workers, persons with disabilities and persons affected by conflicts are seen as vulnerable. Migrants also live in a complex situation. In many parts of the world, women and girls are still deprived of basic rights and opportunities, as reported by the HLPF, 2017.

As a process of implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the rendering of accounts we can point out as weaknesses:

**a- Information on the actions.**

Among the range of challenges and progress reported by each country, a weak area has been the information on the concrete actions taken to implement the SDGs, according to the conclusions of the action group"Together 2030". The lack or insufficiency of information may lead to the risk of a weaker participation of civil society at the national level in terms of implementation and evaluation[[5]](#footnote-5). This information should consider human diversity in society, through its communication or transmission in the various languages ​​of a nation and in accessible means, modes and formats of communication, for example, for persons with disabilities such as deaf persons, blind persons, deaf-blind persons and persons with intellectual disabilities.

**b.- Collection of data and statistics**

The UN conceives a direct relationship between the production of reliable data and statistics and the results of sustainable and resilient development in societies. However, the data collection capacities are not uniform in all the Member States, which represents a difficulty for the National Voluntary Reviews that must be duly supported with the provision of qualitative and quantitative data, duly disaggregated.

In order to meet the data requirements of the Sustainable Development Goals, developing countries will need an estimated $1 billion in statistical support annually from domestic and donor sources.[[6]](#footnote-6).

The Human Rights Committees of the United Nations have persistently reiterated in their Concluding Observations, the urgent fulfillment of the obligations in this area. The 11COSP at UN-NY reiterated it last June.

On the other hand, some analysts on the implementation of SDGs affirm that, although the indicators have been determined for all SDGs, clear methods of measuring indicators have not. Without a standardized and confident way to determine progress, implementation is affected[[7]](#footnote-7).

**c.- Financing**

The 2017 HLPF Report reveals that some national presentations highlighted the need for more multilateral cooperation to develop integrated national funding frameworks that take into account all sources of funding.

**d.- Participation**

For the implementation of the SDGs at the national level, there are several civil society groups that wish to have more space for participation to contribute to the necessary transformations proposed by the 2030 Agenda. Historically marginalized sectors still do not know about the SDGs nor do they have the necessary support for their full and effective participation in society, as is the case of many persons with disabilities and older persons, among others. We must bear in mind that currently more than one billion persons in the world have disabilities and almost 800 million are older persons, figures that are estimated to increase.

**e.- Lack of recommendations in the process of Voluntary National Review**

The RNV does not have a document of recommendations that serve as technical guidance for the States in order to catalyze the implementation of the SDGs.

**3.- What would be the challenges to catalyze the transformative changes requested by the SDGs?**

**a.- Increase financing**

The HLPF Report, 2017, states that, in the last two years, there has been progress in the implementation of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development (2015). The international community is urged to continue implementing this global framework for post-2015 financing.

From another angle, financing for development involves the **fiscal space**, which is the room in a government's budget that allows it to provide resources for a desired purpose without jeopardizing the sustainability of its financial position or the stability of the economy (definition of fiscal space by the International Monetary Fund[[8]](#footnote-8)).

This area must incorporate adequate tax management, including the fight against corruption, evasion and the situation of tax havens.

The aforementioned financing also includes the actions of multidimensional international cooperation, a State obligation that is supported even in legal texts such as the CRPD.

Funding should be allocated to the fulfillment of the SDGs, where we should emphasize transversally strengthening the collection of data and statistics at the national level that allow a documented implementation of the SDGs and their evaluation. We also highlight the allocation of resources for education on sustainable development, promoting sustainable lifestyles based on human rights and respect for diversity (Goal 4.7). At the same time, funds must be allocated to overcome the weaknesses identified and identified above: information on the implementation actions of the SDGs and strengthening the participation of civil society by providing accessible formats of information and support for persons who require it in the expression of their opinion and will according to the CRPD. The financing of these items will be a guarantee of development sustainability.

**b.- Promote Corporate Responsibility with Sustainable Development.**

Bearing in mind that the 2030 Agenda is based on human rights and that on the other hand there are the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (2011), we can extract important applications of this interrelation (connection included in paragraph 67 of the 2030 Agenda):

- Mentioned private entities must **avoid and prevent** their own activities from causing or contributing to cause negative consequences on human rights and therefore on sustainable development, facing those negative consequences when they occur. As can be seen, the company's first contribution to the 2030 Agenda will be of a preventive nature, also contemplating omitting harmful behavior in the framework of SDG 15, SDG 12, SDG 6, SDG 7 and SDG 11.

- According to the principles indicated, companies must adopt an explicit political commitment reflected in policies and procedures to protect human rights, including impact evaluations of their activities. As a result, a second contribution to the 2030 Agenda will be the adoption of policies and actions that directly contribute to the progress of the Agenda, for example SDG 12 Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns and strongly with SDG 8 on employment, which is very gravitating in this area, even though it is not a matter of main analysis in this HLPF.

- A third contribution of companies with the 2030 Agenda will be the adoption and deepening of a leadership for sustainable development channeling some percentage of their profits towards sustainable investments, for example for the preservation of terrestrial ecosystems or contributing to the universal accessibility of cities and other human settlements (SDG 15 and SDG 11, respectively). This investment will feed back to the same private company to exist a society with persons who have access to water, sanitary services, energy, a pollution-free environment and cities or other accessible environments, thus enjoying the welfare. There will be a concrete return to the company through consumers who experience a "healthy" life.

Surely the Forum of the companies in the HLPF 2018 will have an unprecedented vanguard with a great multiplier effect towards the other companies of the different countries.

The United Nations is the right place to explore guidelines that ensure that interactions with the private sector share risks and rewards fairly, including clear mechanisms of accountability, while complying with social and environmental standards, in accordance as indicated in the HLPF Report, 2017.

These three aspects contribute to the evolution of the concept of **corporate responsibility with sustainable development.**

**c.- Support the implementation of the SDGs, including the collection of Data and Statistics**

The United Nations has developed the MAPS project (Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support) that has helped 43 countries to prepare voluntary national reviews for monitoring and review of the SDGs.

Around 200 legislators from 35 countries were trained to report on the formulation of policies on the SDGs. In addition, it has supported 20 countries in the preparation of their national statistical systems for the implementation of the SDGs and more than 350,000 persons around the world have already reported through the MY World 2030 survey how they perceive the progress so far. 32 members of the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) have adopted 'MAPS', a common approach that harnesses the knowledge and skills of the whole society to help countries implement the 2030 Agenda, including national and subnational budgets, creating public awareness and establishing cross-cutting practices for reporting and monitoring. On the other hand, it is important to mention the SDG Policy Support System (PSS-SDG), which was developed during 2016-2018, managed by the United Nations University and other organizations. This program is applied with respect to SDG 6 as part of the "Water in the World we want" project, which is currently being tested in 5 countries for free (Costa Rica, Ghana, Republic of Korea, Pakistan and Tunisia), serving for use and review by policy makers, international organizations and water experts.

The program has been designed to facilitate a better collaboration between the actors and carry out a data survey, at a national level, for the elaboration of public water policies.

If this program has a positive evaluation, it will serve as an orientation and guideline for the adoption of policies related to other SDGs of the 2030 Agenda, allowing for the elaboration of more integrated policies based on reliable information, statistics and data.

**d.- Reorient the substantive approach towards marginalized sectors**

The progress of the 2030 Agenda has shown the need to overcome the isolated analysis of per capita income through indicators that include the exercise of economic, social and cultural rights. In addition to this, universal accessibility should be highlighted as a crucial factor for the exercise of rights by millions of persons. Also, it should be stressed that multidimensional poverty is aggravated when there are groups of persons who can not express their will using support when necessary, seeing their legal capacity restricted, or the denial of the right to vote for these persons. There can be no true sustainability development, with millions of persons in this situation, so overcoming these barriers must be considered in the implementation of the SDGs and in the process of monitoring the HLPF.

From another angle, in order to reach the level of the individual from the macro level of sustainable development, the consideration of human diversity must be of great rigor and precision in order to reliably capture the varied needs of different sectors of the population, for example persons with disabilities and older persons, to name a few, also evaluating their subsequent degree of satisfaction in the implementation of the SDGs.

Then, we must underscore goal 17.19, which opens horizons to develop new indicators to measure progress in sustainable development, reaching the entire population without leaving behind millions of persons.

**e.- Strengthen the mechanism of the HLPF**

After three years of operation of the HLPF, it can move towards national reviews that offer the Member States a technical reflection and conclusions that allow to guide concretely the implementation of the SDGs. The review processes may consider the complementary reports provided by civil society and the inputs produced by the international system for the promotion and protection of human rights, bearing in mind that the latter has strongly supported the 2030 Agenda.

The guidance document may consider the recommendations made by the UPR of the Human Rights Council and by human rights treaty bodies, as indicated by the Meeting of Chairpersons of these Committees in a public statement of 2015.

In this order, the examination of the countries in the HLPF, will be able to deepen in the key and substantive axis of human diversity, with particular attention to the marginalized sectors, measuring concrete actions of planning and participative management, inclusive and accessible with availability of reasonable accommodation and supports that persons may require. Only in this way can we celebrate the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda, strengthening individual and collective awareness, the strength of contemporary democracies and the true transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies.

1. www.itu.int/en/ITU-T/focusgroups/ssc/Pages/default.aspx [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. BLOG HLPF, 2018. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. HLPF Report, 2017 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. BLOG HLPF, 2018 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg17 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. BLOG HLPF, 2018. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\_emp/documents/publication/wcms\_576294.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-8)