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HLPF 2017 V44

Guiding Questions for a Template for CSO engagement for Voluntary National Review at the UN High-level Political Forum (HLPF)

This template aims to identify what mechanisms are in place for government engagement with the SDGs, civil society, local governments, and current initiatives from all actors in realizing the SDGs at a national and international level.

- Country : Japan
- Organization: Japan Civil Society Network on SDGs (SDGs Japan)
- Name: Masaki Inaba (Acting Board Chair)

A. State of national government's preparation for the implementation of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development / SDGs – domestic and international

1. Which ministry (or other institution e.g. in the Prime Minister's office) is now leading or in charge of the planning for the domestic implementation of the SDGs in your country?

Japanese government set SDGs Promotion Headquarters (SDGs-HQ) in PM's Office. The head of the HQ is PM Abe and all of the ministers are its members. Actually, the secretariat of the HQ is served by the Global Issues Cooperation Division of Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Division facilitates all of the process related to SDGs under the guidance and support from the PM's Office.

2. Does your government have a policy framework on SDG implementation? How does this relate to existing or other policy frameworks as national development plans?

The SDGs HQ approved Japan's "SDGs Implementation Guiding Principles" (<http://www.kantei.go.jp/jp/singi/sdgs/dai2/siryou1e.pdf>) on 22 December 2016. It identifies 8 prioritised areas and the list of prioritized policies and programs is attached with the Principles". It is the list of already existed policies and programs related to the 8 prioritised policy areas, no new policies and programs that are aimed to tackle the challenges Japan is facing related to SDGs.

3. Is there parliamentary/congressional scrutiny of the framework? If so please list the relevant committee and its activity



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There are no parliamentary committees specialized for SDGs, though there were some discussions on SDGs in the past, including ODA Special Committee in the Senate (House of the Councillors) made a declaration on G7 Ise-Shima Summit, TICAD VI and SDGs.

As for political parties that has seats in Parliaments, first, the conservative ruling coalition. LDP (Liberal Democratic Party), the strongest and most conservative party In Japan, by now, doesn't have its parliamentarian groups on SDGs, though some senators and representatives have their own interests on sustainability, environment, development, and so on. Komeito Party, which is smaller part of the coalition, is more positive on SDGs. Now it has "SDGs Promotion Committee" which is working actively to advocate for the government to accelerate its efforts.

As for the opposition parties, activities on SDGs has been less active than ruling parties because they don't own the government and there are no incentives to make efforts on SDGs. Democratic Party (DP), which is the largest opposition party, has significant numbers of parliamentarians who are interested in SDGs, but still there have been no interest groups on SDGs. Two days ago, we held a study meeting on SDGs with DP members with the attendance of former foreign minister Katsuya Okada. Japanese Communist Party (JCP), which is the second largest party, also recognizes SDGs; it published its policy framework for the election of the senate last year which used almost one page for SDGs. Other opposition parties don't have any mentions on SDGs in their policy frameworks.

4. Are local governments in your countries actively engaged in the 2030 Agenda / SDGs? If so, how

Some local governments, including governments of prefectures, cities, towns and villages, have expressed their recognitions and interests on SDGs, including Mr. Taizo Mikazuki, the Governor of Shiga Prefecture who proclaimed "a prefecture to promote SDGs".

But Japan is a country whose power is highly centralised, and less policy space for and autonomy is allocated to local governments. Most of the local governments are just seeing and waiting directions from the central government and doing nothing on SDGs, except a few local governments that have powerful independent leaders.

B. CSO engagement with the government in the implementation of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development / SDGs

5. Is the full text of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and SDGs available in your local languages? Which language(s)? Who translated it?

Yes. It is available in Japanese.



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6. Was there any invitation to public consultation on the voluntary national review at HLPF? If so, who was invited?

Yes. There will be an official dialogue between civil society and Japanese government on May 11, and the meeting of SDGs Promotion Round Table Committee on May 22. It will also hold town meetings in 5 large cities in Japan.

7. Have there been any other ways in which civil society has been able to contribute to the implementation, monitoring or review, including national reporting at HLPF?

Yes, we will release civil society shadow report which is not long, including 2 pages of general report on the official mechanisms for SDGs, and various issue reports on the issues related to SDGs, including health, education, poverty, inequality, etc.

8. Has your government invited CSO representatives to be a member of its delegation to participate in the HLPF 2017 and/or make a presentation at the VNR?

Yes. The SDGs Round Table has 14 members including 3 members from civil society. We, SDGs Japan, is responsible to select the civil society members.

9. In case you say “YES”, has your government provided financial support for this participation?

Yes for the 3 members.

C. CSO national coalition-building for the implementation of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development / SDGs

10. Is there any CSO national platform or network focusing on the SDGs?

Yes, it is Japan Civil Society Network on SDGs, or “SDGs Japan”.

11. Are there national platforms that work on specific goals or targets?

Yes, many civil society networks are working on issues related to SDGs.

12. Have you had a regular policy dialogue with relevant government ministries during the preparation and since the adaption of the 2030 Agenda?

Yes, mainly with the Global Issues Cooperation Division of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which is the acting secretariat of SDGs Promoting Headquarters.

D. CSOs own implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development/SDGs

13. How far are CSOs developing their own plans on implementation of the agenda in your country?



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Yes, we have a completed plan for HLPF.

14. Are there particular case studies of effective delivery by CSOs already underway?

No.

15. Are there challenges to prevent CSO delivery of this agenda in your country?

Wider ignorance on SDGs and other international goals, policies, conventions and treaties in Japan. They are lacking the sense of diplomacy. Many ministries that work for domestic issues don't want international interventions.

16. What is the engagement of other stakeholders like the private sector in the national implementation plan? Is there a broader partnership across sectors for implementation? Have any challenges or opportunities been identified in terms of broader partnerships?

There are very active initiatives organized by private sector for SDGs. Basically we have been trying to keep good relationship with them, but many of them are more for profits rather than pursuing sustainability.

17. Is there any clear national plan in terms of funding the delivery of the 2030 Agenda?

Unfortunately, no