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Civil Society Reports: Countries under review at 2017 High Level Political Forum

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 : Thailand
- Organizations: Thailand HLPF Alliance, Foundation for Women, Campaign Committee for Human Rights, ProRights Foundation, Peoples' Empowerment Foundation, Assembly of Natural Resources and Environment NGOs, Thailand Environment Institute and Climate Watch Thailand
- Name: Wanun Permpibul (Climate Watch Thailand, submitting this report)

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?**

The National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB) is the national SDGs focal point and serves as the secretariat of the National Committee for Sustainable Development (CSD). CSD, chaired by the Prime Minister, is composed of 37 members from government, private, academia and civil society (research institutes).

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) is a coordinating point for VNR.

Each respective ministry is responsible for a particular goal.



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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?**

Yes. Thailand development plan is guided by the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy of the Late King. It has been integrated into the current 12th National Economic and Social Development Plan and the 20 Year National Strategy Framework which entail the development of the country. Roadmaps for achieving SDGs by each Ministry in charge also follow suit and are being drafted.

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

No. The plan, policy and framework however is subject to the cabinet approval.

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

No. However, there have been attempts to engage local governments in the discussion which can lead to more engagement in the future.

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? The full text has not been translated into Thai.**

No. Only the SDGs, targets and indicators have been translated into Thai by NESDB and the research team of Thailand Research Fund --who has been undertaking the preliminary study and review of national data and gap analysis in SDGs implementation.

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

No. However, there were meetings organised by the government in different regions of Thailand, but they were on general SDGs. VNR draft was not communicated and shared.

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?**

CSOs forming themselves together with a task force to monitor the HLPF and VNR. It was attempting to make sure that communications outside Thailand would not be limited to government's report only. The task force is called HLPF Alliance comprised of Campaign Committee for Human Rights, ProRights Foundation, Foundation for Women, People's Empowerment Foundation, the Assembly of Natural Resources and Environment NGOs, Thailand Environment Institute and Climate Watch Thailand. Basically, these are engaged in the preparation of shadow reports. The HLPF Alliance did request for a dialogue on VNR with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), who is responsible for compiling all the data from respective ministries for VNR. The Dialogue was finally held on June 7, 2017,



between MoFA, respective governments and HLPF Alliance. It was informed that the first draft of VNR was complete and comments were invited from those in the government. No CSOs were invited to make comments. During the Dialogue, the structure of the VNR was presented; no further detail was shared or communicated. CSOs did present the findings and key recommendations of the shadow report in an attempt to integrate them into the VNR.

By the time the VNR was released and submitted to the UN, it was mentioned that there was a dialogue with between government and CSOs and CSOs are preparing for shadow report. No concrete recommendations from CSOs were incorporated.

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?

No. However, from a number of experiences with UN related conventions and negotiations, there might be academic or research institutions or those representing business sector e.g. Chamber of Commerce, Federation of Thai Industries, invited to be part of the national delegation. The composition of HLPF 2017 delegates might possibly follow suit.

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

Based on the previous experiences with UN related conventions and negotiations, those institutions/organisations covered all the expenses themselves. This could possibly be the same for HLPF 2017 delegates.

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. Different platforms are actively engaged in the SDGs discussions, ranging from specific goals, to SDGs engagement process.

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

Yes. as of the moment, for example:

Foundation for Women closely working and monitoring SDG 5 and ensuring gender/women lens are integrated in all the SDGs.

Climate Watch Thailand closely working on energy and climate change, focusing mainly on SDGs 7, 12, 13 and other SDGs that have implications on climate change and climate induced disasters and social protection.



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ProRights Foundation and Campaign Committee on Human Rights focusing on SDG 16

Peoples' Empowerment Foundation focusing on SDG 1, 2, 16 and 17.

CODI working on CSOs recommendations on SDGs that reflect the national contexts.

NGO-COD, focusing on the NGOs engagement in the SDGs process and trying to identify SDGs for local contexts.

The Assembly of Natural Resources and Environment NGOs focusing on environment related SDGs

Thailand Environment Institute, focusing on environment related SDGs and SDG 16.

These are for examples of the time being now. It is expected that more CSOs will be engaged during the course of implementation in the following years.

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

Yes, to a certain level, and different from one Goal to another, depending on how CSOs are deeply engaged in a specific goal, access to information, available resources to attend dialogues/meetings. Most of the dialogues are in the form of meetings on specific goals. There has been no formal channel or mechanism for dialogues between the government and CSOs.

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

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

Implementing SDGs is seen to be an opportunity to rethink the development pathway of the country and a number of CSOs/NGOs are taking this opportunity to engage and influence the development of the country. A few CSOs/NGOs are developing and implementing their activities incorporating SDGs and looking ahead towards how to identify SDGs targets and indicators hoping to communicate and influence the government's implementation. Some of CSOs/NGOs are in the process of developing a proposal highlighting sustainable development in a different geographical areas and issue. These are aimed to have evidence-based cases that will inform the national SDGs of the country.

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

Two cases presented below:

A case of climate change adaptation: As Thailand is one of the vulnerable countries to impacts of climate change. NGOs working on climate change, apart from advocating for no fossil fuel



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subsidies and no new coal fired power plants, they are engaged in the building resilient communities and enhancing long term adaptation process. Unpredictable patterns of rainfalls, temperature increases and extreme climatic events have been observed by local communities whose lives and livelihoods have been relying upon the weather and climate. However, plans and policies from the relevant governments particularly of the Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment; and the Department of Disaster Mitigation and Prevention of the Ministry of Interior are mainly focusing upon natural disasters, disasters preparedness and responses to disasters which are often seen as rapid onsets e.g. floods. Slow onsets e.g. drought, temperature increases and sea level rises, are not yet fully realised. With the fact that climate change is due to rising greenhouse gases, there needs to be communications on long term risks associated with human-induced climate change using scientific climate scenarios. These will help communities in realising the future climate-induced risks rather than the current risks due to past disasters, and they can plan to reduce their risks, build their resilience and then plan for transformative adaptation. A few NGOs initiated a project activity to communicate climate risks and prepare for community adaptation plan. It was concluded by the end of the project activity that, adaptation is site specific and climate impacts are not limited only to rapid onsets e.g. disasters and floods. It is more than preparedness and responses to and recovery from the current ones. It needs a long term adaptation process in order to facilitate their livelihoods and adaptive capacities to be resilient. It was also found that economic and social livelihoods contexts, and social protection schemes will need to be significantly addressed in order to plan for climate adaptation process. The findings of the project are expected to be communicated and NGOs engaged in climate change issues are making attempts to advocate for long term adaptation process under the framework of SDGs.

A case of women issue: CSOs working on women issues led by the Foundation for Women had advocated for several years for gender equality and ending violence against women. In 2015, the government adopted Gender Equality Act, which became effective on September 9, 2015. Additionally, there has been progress made by the Department of Women's Affair and Family Development who has recently started the process of developing a National Plan to End Violence against Women which includes all forms of violence. At the moment, there are protection mechanisms and measures being introduced to assist aggrieved women and girls. However, women from indigenous communities, e.g. Hmong, Lisu and Pakeryor ethnics, remain excluded from these services and do not have access to legal assistance and protection. In 2017, a Bill entitled "Protection of Family Members' Security" aiming at strengthening the family institution was approved by the Cabinet albeit the noted concern of women's and children's rights network. The main concern is that the draft bill does not emphasise on the protection of human rights and security of women but rather on promoting the family institution. The inadequacy of the system to support women and girls who are victims of domestic violence to seek legal protection under the Act makes women who have been victims of domestic violence remain vulnerable to repeated acts of violence by the same perpetrator once they have gone through family reconciliation process. In fact, there are a number of cases of women who eventually committed crime against their husbands/partners out of self-defense or as the last



resort due to the suffering from domestic violence they have endured. The women who commit violent act against their husbands are prosecuted under criminal law and subjected to severe punishment. The history of family violence is not specifically put in the record and used as evidence to defend the accused women. The Ministry of Social Development and Human Security (MSDHS) has yet to adopt policy and guidelines dealing with this type of women including provision for economic and legal support to women and their children. The Foundation for Women together with its network is engaged in the process and making attempts to ensure all these problems are voiced and heard through inclusive participation. These remain to be followed up and monitored to ensure women and especially those in the indigenous communities are protected, in the years to come.

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

Yes, given the current status of the government's preparation and implementation being quite at the beginning and the current state of CSOs engagement in the process, the following challenges need to be addressed and responded upon, in order to pursue effective engagement and national delivery of SDGs in a manner than benefits local communities and the marginalised groups.

Inclusiveness: All groups need to be fully identified especially those marginalised groups, in order to ensure no one is left behind, and included in the planning, designing and decision making and monitoring processes. As of the current status, despite being affected by current development activities, they are left out from the process, including fisherfolks, farmers, indigenous communities, women, and those sexual orientation and gender identity expression (SOGIE).

Participation: Those mainstream CSOs/NGOs are mostly invited and engaged in the current SDGs process while those at the grassroot or remote areas are left out. There needs to ensure full and meaningful participation of all in the process. In the attempt to localise SDGs, participation of all stakeholders and groups need to be ensured.

Representation: In the case where CSOs representation is needed, the process needs to be effectively communicated through CSOs who will manage their nomination or selection process themselves. This will ensure meaningful and effective representation. For the case of CSOs being selected to sit in the National Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), it has been observed that they have represented their organisations rather than the majority of CSOs in the country.

Contents: This refers to the establishment of indicators for SDGs. Indicators need to reflect the aspiration of the goals and well respond to the challenges and expectations to overcome them. Engagement of all groups and stakeholders in identifying the challenges and establishing indicators will ensure the directions to achieve SDGs.



Resources: Particularly finance and funds for CSOs to both effectively engage in the SDGs process and initiate their activities and actions towards achieving SDGs, need to be ensured and supported by the government.

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?**

Private sector and corporates are engaged in the SDGs implementation. A few of them are engaged under the UN Global Compact. Communications on the progress of their implementation are seen in both printed and TV media. Partnership between government and private sector has been seen strengthened and appreciated. However, partnership with CSOs as an equal partner has not been realised yet.

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

The development of the country is guided by the Five Year National Economic and Social Development Plan and the 20 Year National Strategic Framework which SDGs are incorporated. Plans of each line ministry in line with these plans will be budgeted for implementation.

However, the role of CSOs is not fully recognised and is not taken as an equal partnership, funds and budgets in order to support CSOs in the SDGs process is yet to be followed up and monitored.