

Action for Sustainable Development
HLPF 2018 Civil Society Report Template

Guiding Questions for a National Report on CSO engagement in Voluntary National Reviews for the UN High-level Political Forum (HLPF). This template aims to identify what mechanisms are in place for government engagement with the SDGs; including with civil society, local governments, donors and current initiatives from wider stakeholders in realizing the SDGs at a national and international level.

Country: **Bhutan**

Organization: **Disabled Persons' Association of Bhutan**

Name: **Sonam Gyamtsho, Executive Director, DPAB**

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?

Ans: Gross National Happiness Commission Secretariat is the apex agency responsible for the central planning and coordination of all socio-economic development plans and programs in Bhutan. Thus, GNHCS is also the central agency responsible for the successful implementation of SDGs.

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?

Ans: Bhutan's Development Framework of GNH per se is a policy framework on SDG implementation. The Development Framework of GNH covers the genesis of the SDGs with the three normative core principles of Universality, Indivisibility and Leaving No One Behind.

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

Ans: Any proposed development framework or policies in Bhutan must be consulted with all relevant stakeholders before the draft is presented to the approving body. All these proposed framework or policies will have to be screened through GNH Policy Screening Tools. Only then, the framework or policies will be sent to the Parliament for extensive discussions and approval.

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

Ans: Bhutan's over all development goal is to have 'Just, Harmonious and Sustainable Society through enhanced Decentralization.' The goal of the nation in itself empowers the local government leaders and communities to actively engage in the 2030 Agenda.

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?

Ans: Bhutan's official correspondences usually are carried out through English. English is not only used as medium of instructions in schools, but it has also become a lingua franca amongst the younger generations. Therefore, there is little use of translating the text of Agenda 2030.

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

Ans: Extensive consultations and sensitization were carried out on SDGs as well as on the formulation of the 12th Five Year Plans because the implementation of SDGs integrated 12th Five Year Plans requires cooperation from all sectors in the country. Similarly, all stakeholders were invited to public consultation on the VNR process. Apart from Government agencies, international agencies, private sector entities, parliamentarians, political parties, civil society organizations and local government officials were invited for extensive consultations on VNR.

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?

Ans: Since VNR is a State led report, theoretically, it provided space for participation by all key actors such as civil society, International NGOs, local government, etc.

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

Ans: As of now, no invitation has been accorded as the VNR report in itself is in a draft stage which will be finalized very soon. Perhaps, after finalization, the government may extend and invitation to participate in the HLPF.

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

Ans: This will be only known after the finalization of the VNR report. However, I do not think that the government would have any reserved funds for participants from the civil society organizations.

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?

Ans: As of now, we do not have any CSO national platform or network focusing on the collectively. However, the vision of the all civil society organizations in Bhutan is to be 'a civil society promoting an equitable, just, inclusive and compassionate society.' And this very vision of CSOs in Bhutan is in line with the core principles of Agenda 2030. Thus, all CSOs in Bhutan in their own individual capacity and in accordance to their annual plans, work towards achieving this vision.

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

Ans: All CSOs in Bhutan work in accordance to their plans and budget adequacy. And all are geared towards achieving one vision. For instance, Disabled Persons' Association of Bhutan (DPAB) specifically works to achieve 7 SDGs with over 11 Targets in total. Similarly, there are other CSOs that are involved with other goals and targets as well.

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

Ans: Since both government and CSOs are guided by their own visions, regular policy dialogue specifically on Agenda 2030 was not possible. However, there were couple of dialogues organized by International NGOs in Bhutan where all were invited to take part.

D. 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?

Ans: Since the very vision of CSOs is geared towards integrating SDGs, all CSOs' plans are aligned with the SDGs. And the plans are developed individually as per the availability of funds.

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

Ans: In terms of Poverty reduction, Tarayana Foundation (CSO) has been leading the way and to a great extent, the foundation has helped many villages to alleviate from poverty. And in terms of Leaving No One Behind, DPAB has been in the forefront to reach to the most marginalized section of society- persons with disabilities. And we have indeed been in position to make many of the persons with disabilities enjoy decent and independent life style from being dependent initially.

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

Ans: Challenges are very daunting. From lack of funds to deeply rooted mindset of people are all daunting challenges for CSOs to deliver services.

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?

Ans: The private sector has been consulted during the preparation of VNR report as well as the country's 12th Five Year Plans. The 12th FYP has identified triple 'C' as thrust area for implementation, which in essence mean coordination, collaboration, consolidation not just with

sectors but with whole of society, where private sectors, and CSOs are integral part of it.

There's coordination and collaboration issues for now which the government view as opportunities in the upcoming 12th FYP to get resolved. The 12th FYP set the tone for opportunities with this broader partnership with whole of government and whole of society.

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

What is the role of international donors/development partners?

Ans: As of now there is no separate national plan for funding 2030 Agenda. The resources allocated for 12th FYP will serve as funding for SDG implementation which are well embedded within the 12th FYP. However, plans are in the offing to carry out costing exercise in collaboration with Ministry of Finance to fund SDG implementation.