



**ACTION FOR SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT**

Survey of the UN 2030 Agenda Follow Up and Review process

***Analysis - Towards a more open &
inclusive approach***

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Introduction

We are now over 3 years into the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the Sustainable Development Goals at its core. In 2015, governments committed to an ambitious agenda for transforming our world towards a more just and sustainable future, including follow up and review mechanisms to ensure effective monitoring of delivery at global, regional and national levels. In 2019, there will be a review of these follow up and review mechanisms and it is essential that civil society voices are included in the process. As a basis for communicating the views and recommendations of civil society at this critical point, this report draws on a survey of stakeholders assessing their experience of these mechanisms across the first three years.

As part of the 2030 Agenda, there was a commitment to a follow up and review process that is “robust” and “participatory”. This process includes: a) national engagement linked to the Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs); b) regional engagement linked to the UN’s regional Sustainable Development Forums; and c) global review at the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) at UN HQ in New York. This process provides an annual process for review at the United Nations, as well as a broader space for dialogue on sustainable development. The Forum currently meets annually under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council for eight days, plus every four years at the level of Heads of State and Government under the auspices of the General Assembly for two days. The first meeting under the General Assembly will be in 2019.

Action for Sustainable Development (www.action4sd.org) is a civil society platform which exists to enable and empower an ecosystem of grassroots partners, to engage with the UN’s 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement. This survey builds on work undertaken every year since 2015 to support effective engagement of national coalitions and networks of civil society in the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) at the UN. Support for the preparation and administration of the survey, and the draft of this report, was provided by a small research-to-policy team at Newcastle University.¹

This survey was widely distributed to the A4SD networks during the period October-December 2018, including many organisations and coalitions that have been directly involved in their own Voluntary National Reviews and in developing their own civil society reports. There were 149 responses from a broad range of civil society organisations; 119 in English, 21 French, 9 Spanish; from 62 countries, with the highest number of responses coming from Nigeria and India.

The report presents findings from the survey on four key themes. In section 1, we report on stakeholder perceptions of how far vulnerable and marginalised groups have been a focus of review processes. In section 2, we assess stakeholder perspectives on global processes, especially the HLPF; in section 3, we summarise stakeholder responses on the regional level, and in section 4, the national level (including the preparation of VNRs). Lastly, in section 5, we draw together some key findings and corresponding recommendations. The report is accompanied by a method note and more detailed information on the kinds of organisations that responded: this supporting information is gathered in an annex (Annex A) at the end of the report.

¹ This team was led by Dr Graham Long. Dr Anna Wambach programmed the online survey. The data analysis and graphical presentation work for this report, and the accompanying method note, was done by Louise Luxton.

1. 'Leave No One Behind'

The 2030 Agenda pledges to “focus on the poorest, most vulnerable and marginalised” in follow up and review processes at all levels; as many of our partners are directly involved in supporting those key communities, the survey questions for each level (national, regional, global) tested how far civil society thought this pledge had been effectively fulfilled. Respondents² perceived more of a focus on groups “left behind” at the global level (33% thought it received the highest or second highest focus) than at the national level (18%) or at the regional level (15%). The contrast between national, regional and global level can be seen in the three charts below:

Fig. 1 'Left behind' as focus of review (National Level)

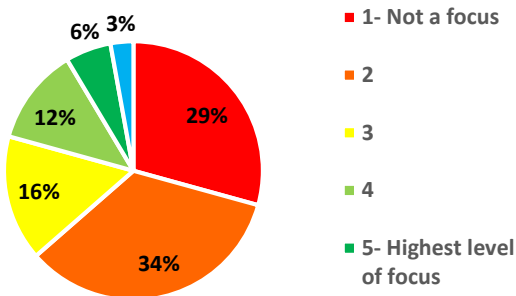


Fig. 2 'Left behind' as a focus of review (Regional Level)

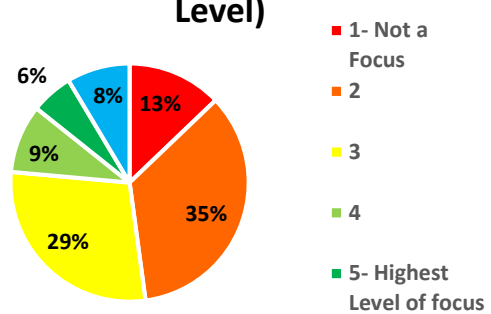
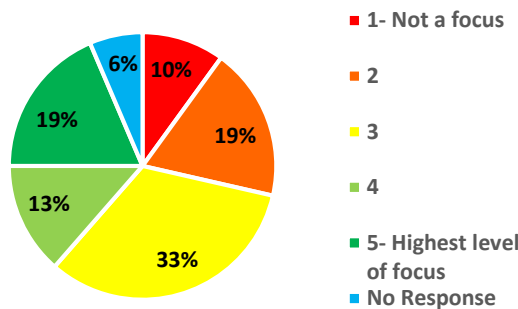


Fig. 3 'Left Behind' as focus of review (Global Level)

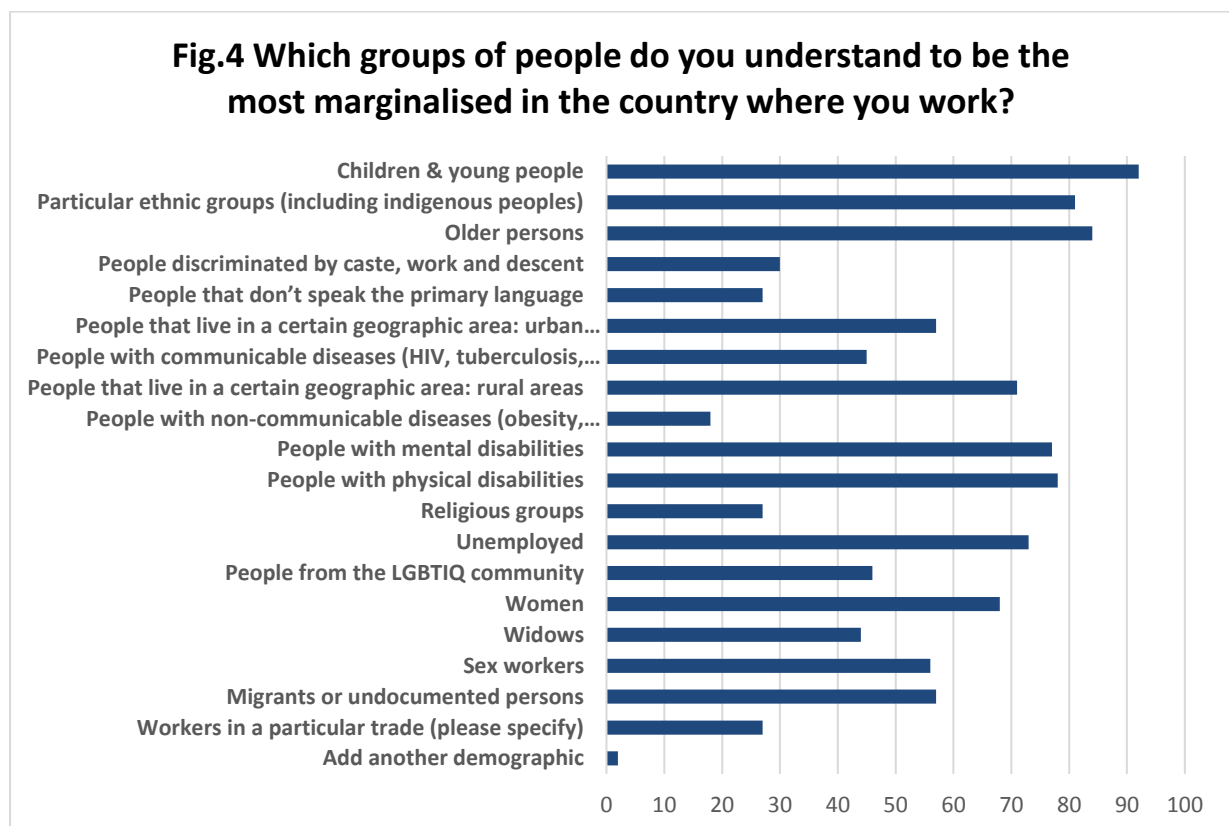


It is difficult to see how review processes can ‘focus’ on vulnerable and marginalised groups without making efforts to *include* such groups. The survey, then, also asked about inclusion of such groups in review processes. In a similar pattern to the question on focus, respondents felt that there have so far been more opportunities for the voices of marginalised communities to be heard at the global level (30%) than at the regional level (20%) or at the national level (17%).

² The total number of respondents for each survey question addressed in sections 1-3 was approximately 140. For clarity of presentation in some of the Figures below, the “don’t know” category of response has been excluded.

The number of respondents who testified to a lack of focus on vulnerable and marginalised groups at the national level is especially worrying. 63% of respondents testified that there was ‘not a focus’ or ‘little focus’ (scores 1 or 2 on the 1-5 scale) on those left behind, and 65% of respondents saw ‘little’ or ‘no’ opportunity for such groups to engage at the national level. Assessed in the context of less negative perceptions of regional and global processes, there is a clear indication here that national level processes are lagging behind – underscoring the need for urgent work to raise the expectations for national level review. There is a critical need for member states to pay more attention to the needs of those who are left behind in their own countries, and to ensure that these communities are included in their review processes. At the same time, this weakness at the national level reinforces the need for strong global and regional review mechanisms - on this evidence, global and regional mechanisms are functioning as backstops in the absence of inclusive national level review.

One survey question asked respondents which groups they perceived as the most marginalised, with the results presented in Fig. 4 below. This offers a picture, aggregated from different national contexts, of the kinds of groups that should be the focus of review and which should be included in review processes. The breadth of these groups reinforces the urgency of efforts to ‘leave no one behind’ - whether children and youth or older people; those marginalised due to their ethnicity, economic status or on the basis of caste, work and descent; those excluded due to their gender; those excluded due to a disability; or those excluded on the basis of geographic location. Overall, it seems clear from the survey responses that there is still a long way to go to ensure delivery of the promise to ‘leave no one behind’ and indeed to ensure that those furthest behind – including the specific groups identified in Fig. 4, across different national contexts - are supported first.



2. Follow Up and Review at different levels

Overall perceptions of the review process are mixed, with 43% of respondents ‘Agreeing’ or ‘Strongly Agreeing’ that the review process is “robust, voluntary, effective, participatory, transparent and integrated” , while 35% ‘Disagree’ or ‘Strongly Disagree’. But this overall assessment marks divergent views of the national, regional and global levels. A series of survey questions asked about perceptions of effectiveness and processes for engagement at each of these levels, and in the following three sections we present these results, starting with perceptions of the global level.

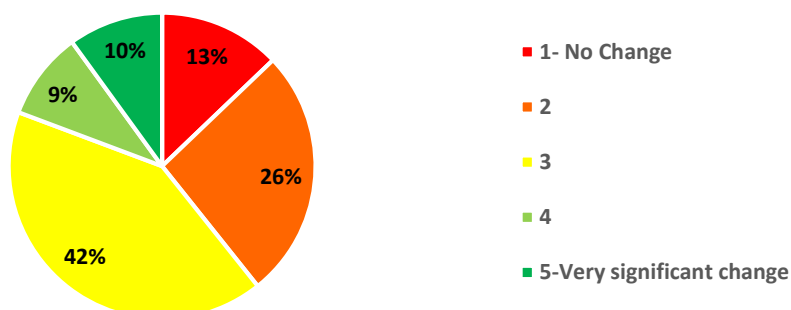
2.1 Global Level Review Processes

A crucial part of the review process is the global follow up and review framework, including the HLPF and wider international commitments to deliver the 2030 Agenda. This survey asked respondents about their overall perceptions of global progress (section 2.1.1 below), the effectiveness of global review processes (2.1.2), and the scope for engagement at the global level, including respondents’ needs and priorities for support (2.1.3).

2.1.1 Global Progress

Overall it appears that there is limited confidence that policies and priorities are moving in the right direction. We posed a question on the scale of global change in the first three years of SDG implementation. Only 19% indicated that there had been ‘Significant’ or ‘Very Significant’ change, while 39% thought there had been ‘No Change’ or ‘Little Change’.

Fig.5 In the first three years of implementation of the 2030 Agenda, do you believe there has been a significant shift in policies and priorities around the world to focus on the sustainable development agenda?



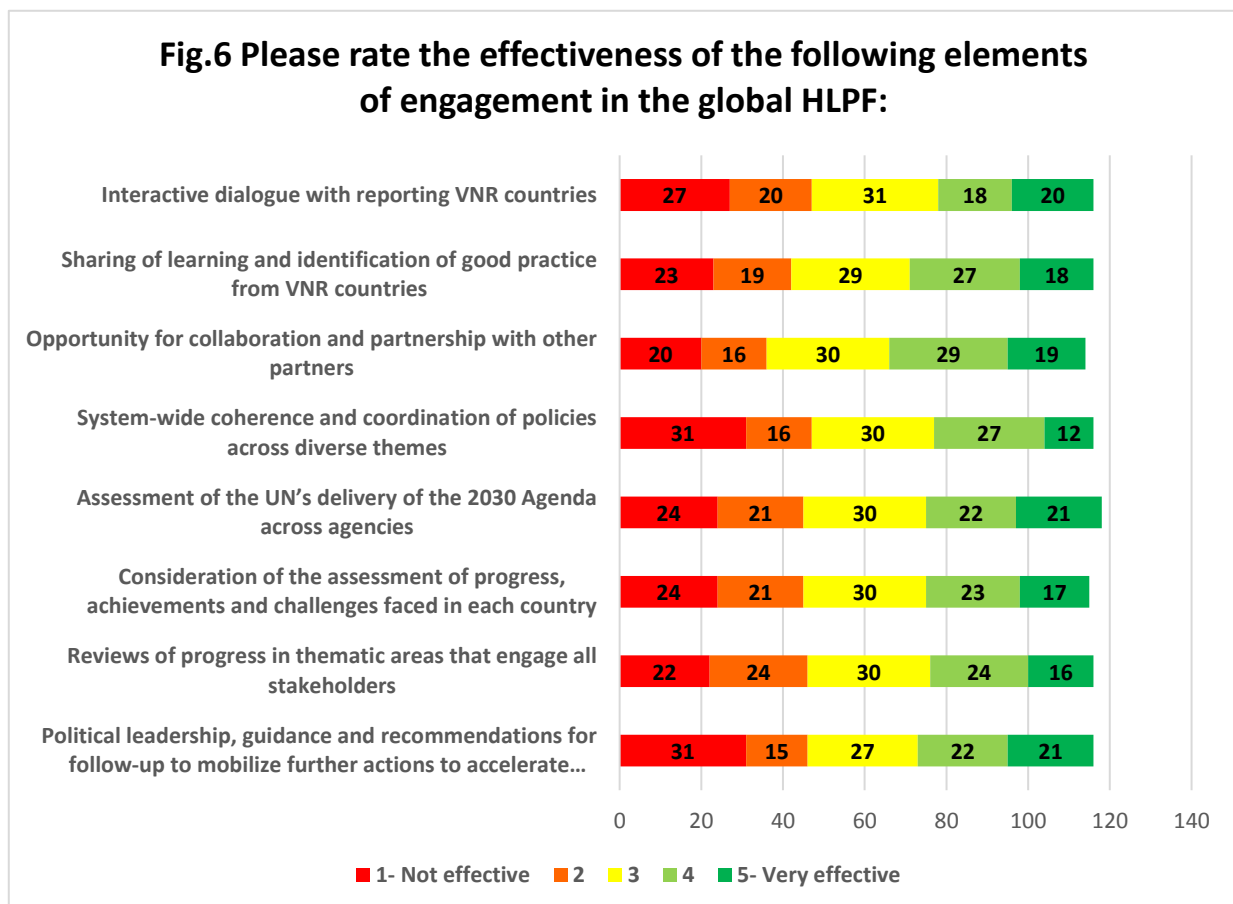
However, many of the respondents do believe that “sufficient changes are being put in place around the world to reach the transformation envisaged by 2030” : 39% either ‘Agree’ or ‘Strongly Agree’, while 33% either ‘Disagree’ or ‘Strongly Disagree’. It is not clear what to draw from these more

mixed perceptions. Respondents might feel that governments are moving in the right direction, though the results are not yet evident; or they might be reflecting positively on the presence of Agenda 2030 itself. Alternatively, this might be highlighting a belief that citizens themselves, or organised civil society, are engaging to deliver much-needed change.

2.1.2 Effectiveness of the HLPF

Respondents' views on the effectiveness of the HLPF, understood in terms of its stated purpose as drawn from the 2030 Agenda itself and the resolutions on follow up and review, were very mixed. Fig. 6 below presents the data for 8 different elements below.

Whilst for every element, *some* respondents judged the HLPF to be performing very effectively (scores of 4 or 5 on our scale), at the same time in almost all cases a *larger* proportion of respondents thought that the HLPF was not effective (scores of 1 and 2 on our scale). The exception is collaboration and partnership, an area where more respondents thought the HLPF was performing well compared to those who thought it was performing badly. The three areas where the HLPF was felt to be weakest was in its role in providing leadership and guidance, fulfilling its focus on policy coherence and coordination, and facilitating interactive dialogue with reporting VNR countries.



2.1.3 Engagement at the global level

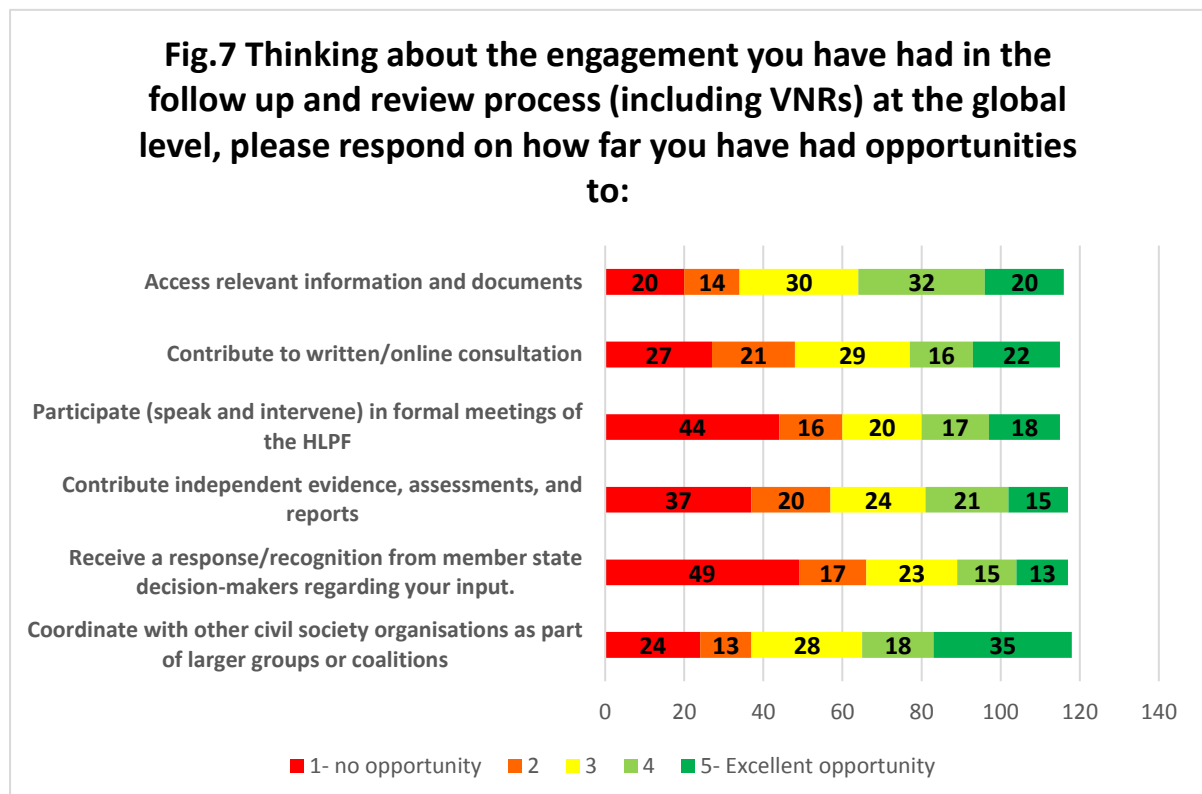
Respondents were also asked about opportunities and processes for engagement at the global level, as summarised in the chart below.

A clear pattern of perceived strengths and weaknesses emerges. Online information sharing is regarded as relatively open and accessible. The majority of respondents felt that the opportunities to access relevant information from the global level are good, with many more respondents feeling they had a ‘Good’ or ‘Excellent Opportunity’ (45%) than those who felt they had ‘Limited’ or ‘No Opportunity’ (29%) to access information. Opportunities to coordinate with civil society were also widely regarded as excellent – this category received the largest number of such responses.

While the global processes are providing information in a ‘broadcast’ format, responses highlight the limited opportunity for civil society to input into the process: scores on consultation were more mixed and on the remaining categories of participation, are markedly more negative. This includes on the opportunities to speak and intervene or contribute independent evidence, assessments and reports.

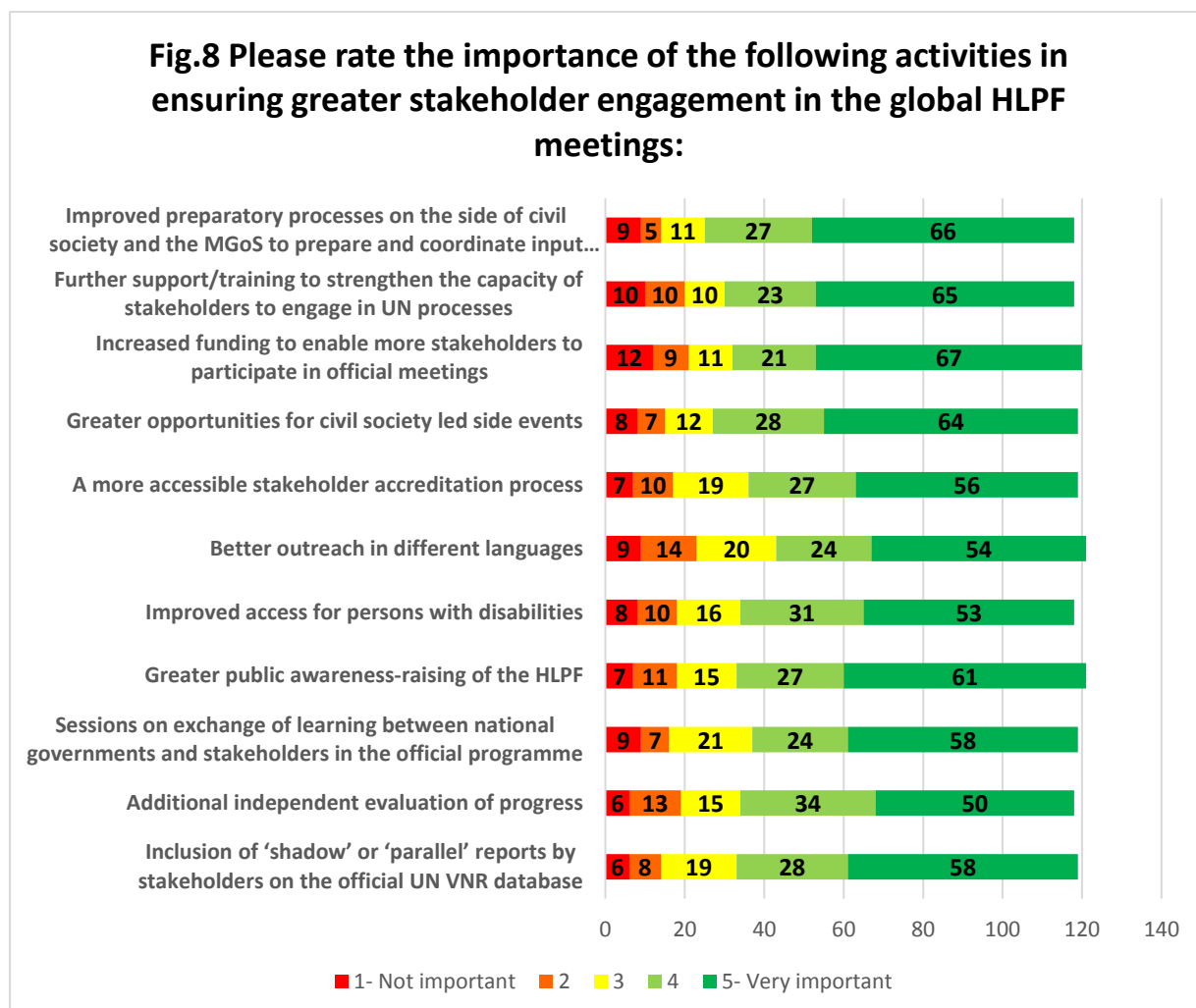
However, the area of highest concern was the opportunity to receive a response or recognition from member states regarding their input, here 42% of respondents stated that they had ‘No Opportunity’ to receive a response from decision-makers.

Overall, the results suggest that engagement at the HLPF does not yet include sufficient space for real debate and two-way interaction with an inclusive range of stakeholders. And it reinforces the



doubts highlighted above on the effectiveness of the HLPF as a space for “interactive dialogue”.

Lastly, respondents were asked about which particular activities were important in enabling stakeholder participation. Here, respondents supported improvements to inclusion of civil society perspectives across every aspect, as shown in Fig. 8 below.



There is clearly a desire to contribute information and to provide evidence-based insights from the lived experiences of community organisations and grass-roots individuals as part of a holistic review process, reflected in strong support for the inclusion of civil society 'shadow' or 'parallel' reports in the official UN VNR database so that the views of key communities can be viewed alongside the official reports.

There is also a strong demand to ensure a process at the HLPF which ensures genuine inclusivity; in practice, this means a more accessible accreditation process, better outreach in different languages and improved access for persons with disabilities to ensure that a wide range of participants are able to fully engage with the process.

The areas which were considered to be most important to ensure greater stakeholder engagement in the HLPF meetings (in terms of respondents rating them as 'very important') were increased funding to enable more stakeholders to participate in official meetings, and further support or training to strengthen the capacity of stakeholders to engage in UN processes.

This suggests that opportunities are still not widely available: for example, only a relatively limited group of stakeholders is able to understand and physically attend the HLPF. It would be valuable to develop support for a wider group of civil society organisations and active citizens. Though we cannot test this here, it is possible that divergent experiences inside and outside this relatively narrow and connected group of stakeholders explain the genuinely mixed responses elsewhere in the survey, where roughly equal numbers of respondents take sharply opposing views on process, on the adequacy of review, and the efficacy of the HLPF.

Perhaps reflecting this, a large number of respondents also highlight the need for improved preparatory processes for stakeholders around the HLPF on the part of the Major Groups and other Stakeholders as well as an even wider range of civil society partners.

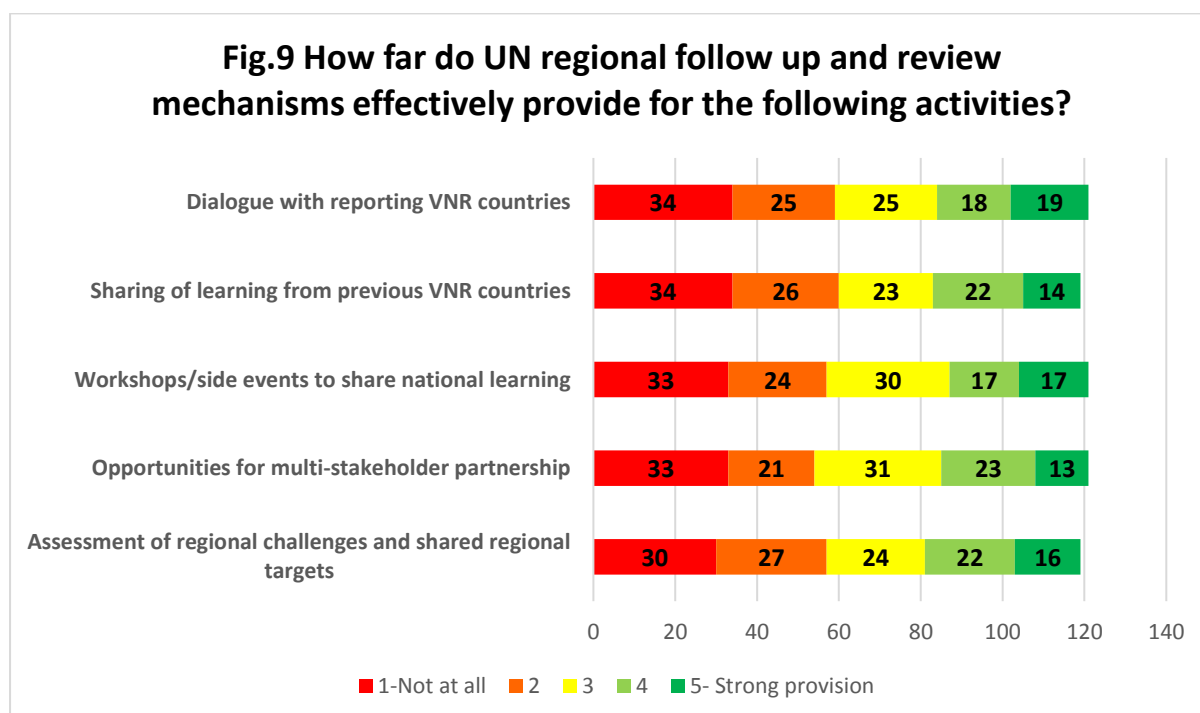
2.2 Regional Level Review Processes

A key aspect of the 2030 Agenda follow up and review mechanisms is the regional exchange and discussion of activities and priorities through the UN’s regional sustainable development forums, as well as effective regional networking across civil society. Respondents were asked their views on the effectiveness of UN regional follow up and review mechanisms (2.2.1) and the availability of opportunities for engagement in the UN’s regional follow up and review processes (2.2.2).

2.2.1. Effectiveness of regional UN follow up and review mechanisms

As the Fig 9 shows, the effectiveness of regional follow up and review processes as a site of meaningful dialogue and learning in support of the VNR process appears limited at best. Respondents were generally negative about the effectiveness of the regional level in facilitating dialogue and shared learning from national contexts, with each activity receiving more ‘Not at all’ and Limited Provision responses than Good or Strong Provision responses.

Respondents did highlight that regional follow up and review mechanisms do allow assessment of regional challenges and shared responses (32% of responses noted ‘Good Provision’ and ‘Strong Provision’ in this respect). Nevertheless, the majority of respondents (48%) still perceived limited provision. This suggests that regional processes, including regional Sustainable Development Forums, are not yet effectively facilitating this more detailed and specific scrutiny.



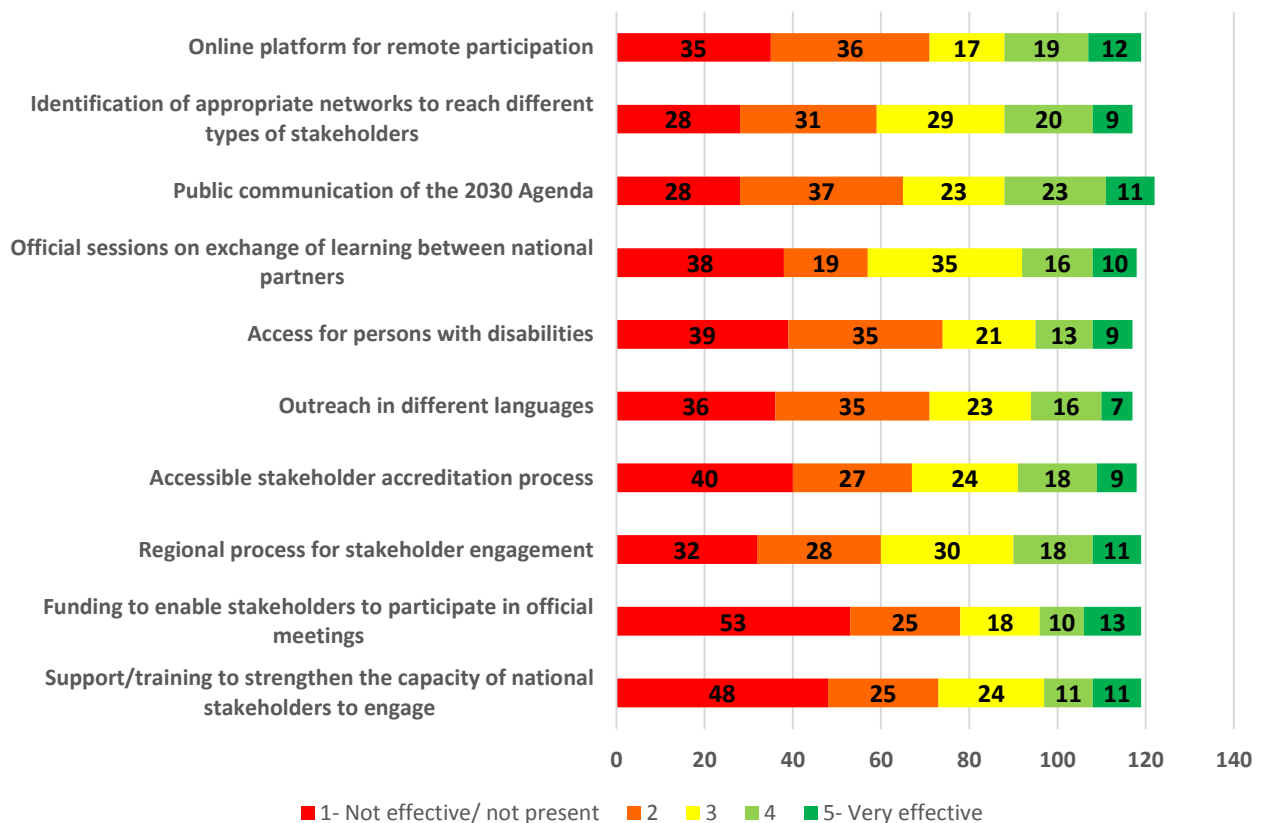
2.2.2. Engagement at the regional level

Respondents were asked to assess the effectiveness of various elements of the formal regional process in terms of facilitating engagement, including accessibility for various demographics, availability of funding, and access to formal processes and meetings.

Reponses were largely mixed, though on the whole more negative than positive. Respondents found the funding and training of stakeholders to allow for participation in regional engagement mechanisms are the least effective: these responses received the largest share of ‘Not Effective/Not Present’ responses. This follows a similar trend found in global level responses, demonstrating that the highest priorities to improve engagement are around the need for better resourcing. There is a clear need for appropriate funding to ensure stakeholders can attend and also a demand for greater levels of support or training to strengthen the capacity of national stakeholders to engage.

Where engagement is highlighted by respondents as most effective is in terms of public communication of the 2030 Agenda and online platforms allowing remote participation, both receiving around a quarter of responses rating them ‘effective’ or ‘very effective’. Positive responses across each element are fairly balanced, indicating that there is at least *some* opportunity for engagement in each area. Yet the responses overall are largely pessimistic indicating that more work can be done to provide stronger opportunities for stakeholder engagement on a regional level.

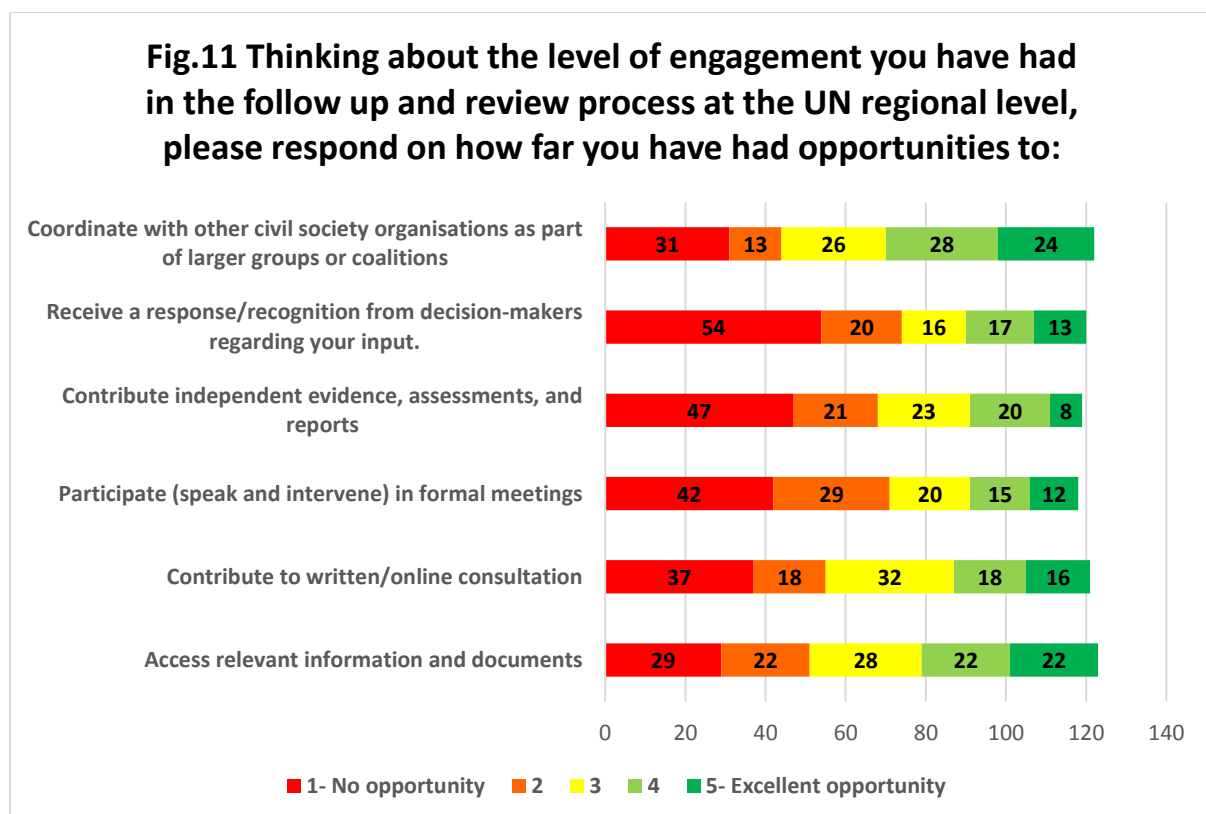
Fig.10 Please rate the effectiveness of the following elements of engagement in your region:



It is also significant to note that regional processes are not seen to be very effective in terms of accessible engagement. There is a clear demand for improvements in outreach in different languages, access for persons with disabilities and a more accessible stakeholder accreditation process.

As for the global level, Respondents were asked about opportunities to engage in various ways with UN follow up and review processes. Areas of success and weakness become obviously apparent, as set out in Fig 11 below. The opportunity to receive response/recognition from decision-makers received the most 'No Opportunity' and 'Limited Opportunity' responses, closely followed by the opportunity to contribute independent evidence, assessments, and reports or to participate in formal meetings. Engagement with formal processes and opportunities for dialogue with policy makers in these institutional settings thus appears limited.

On the other hand, the opportunity to access relevant information and documents, to contribute to written/online consultation, and to coordinate with other civil society organisations seem to be perceived more positively, receiving a balanced mix of responses between those who felt they had 'No Opportunity' and those who felt they had a 'Good' or 'Excellent' Opportunity to engage. It does appear that the majority of respondents do see real opportunities for regional collaboration, with 43% of respondents answering that there are 'Excellent' and 'Good' opportunities to coordinate with other stakeholders. Respondents named a number of regional networks they currently engage with in Europe, such as: Concord & SDG Watch Europe; in Latin America: Mesa de Articulación de Redes y Plataformas de OSC; and in Africa: the Africa CSO Working Group as well as sub-regional groups such as the East and Southern Africa Regional Network.



Stakeholders perceive sharply limited opportunities to participate and engage in formal processes and mechanisms. As with the global level, access to information around these processes, and collaboration within civil society organisations are perceived as functioning more effectively. This suggests that the formal arenas do not yet provide sufficient space for the debate and exchange of views needed to ensure a truly robust process; the interactivity of these spaces –the opportunity to contribute evidence, participate, and receive a response from decision-makers - is viewed negatively by the majority of respondents.

2.3. National Level Review Processes

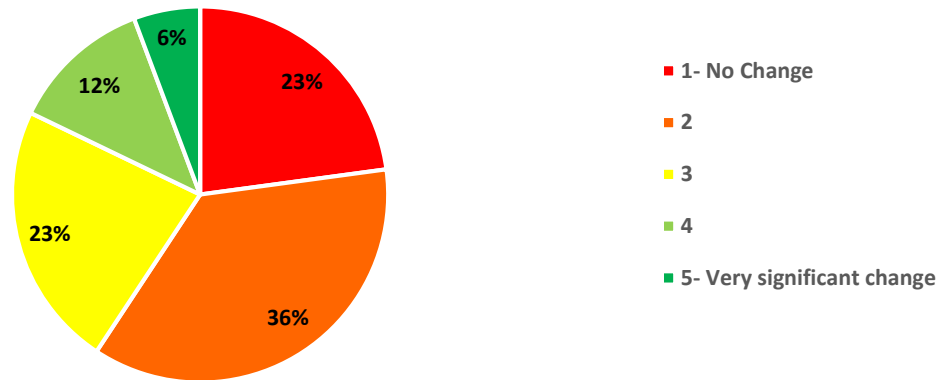
Survey questions concerning national level follow up and review processes asked respondents to assess the actions, processes, and priorities of national governments and the availability and effectiveness of opportunities for stakeholder engagement. Questions were asked on the effectiveness of official processes in their country (2.3.2), and the opportunities to engage with national level review processes (2.3.3), parallel to those asked for global and regional levels. In addition respondents were asked their views on whether their respective national government's priorities had shifted in light of the 2030 Agenda (similar to the opening question on progress at the global level) – presented in 2.3.1 below.

As with the global and regional levels, responses are mixed but perceptions seem generally pessimistic concerning opportunities to engage and the effectiveness of review processes at the national level.

2.3.1. National Government response to the 2030 Agenda Respondents were asked whether they believed that in the last three years, their national government had shifted its policies and priorities to focus on the sustainable development agenda . As Fig. 12 below demonstrates, most respondents believed that there had been 'Little Change' or 'No Change' in their government's priorities (59%); only 6% of respondents believed that there had been 'Very Significant' change. This demonstrates a widespread perception that governments have been slow to enact relevant plans or policies. Stakeholders generally do not believe that their respective governments have prioritised the 2030 Agenda – something that may be structurally linked to the perceived lack of opportunities for stakeholder engagement.

Furthermore, the Voluntary National Review process does not in general, seem to be sufficiently linked to national planning processes. In response to a question on this link, over half of respondents (54%) believed that there is No Link or a Very Limited Link between the VNR and national planning processes, while only 15% thought that these processes were Well Linked or Strongly Linked. This reinforces the importance of ensuring that the sustainable development priorities are clearly integrated into mainstream domestic policies and budget priorities in areas such as energy, health, education etc. Clearly, there is a danger that VNRs are regarded by governments as "one-off" processes not effectively linked into domestic policymaking or institutions.

Fig.12 In your country, over the first three years of implementation of the 2030 Agenda, do you believe there has been a significant shift in policies and priorities by your government to focus on the sustainable development agenda?

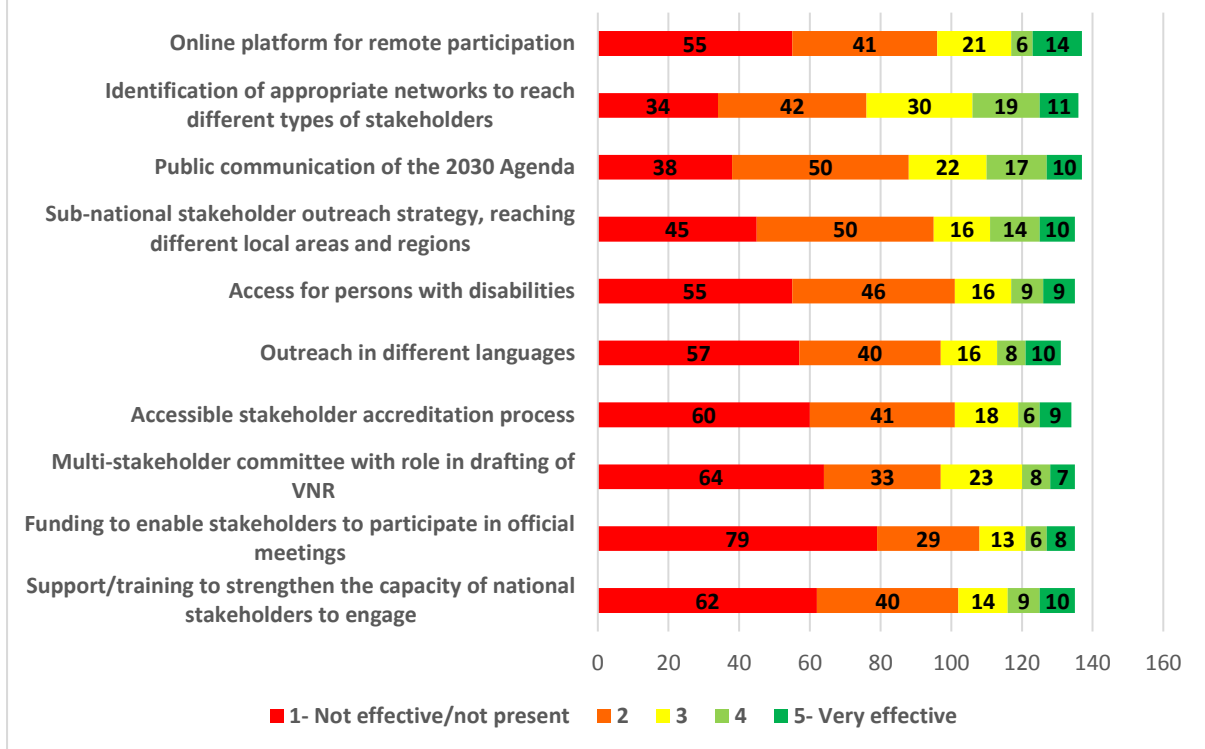


2.3.2. Effectiveness of national review processes

Respondents largely found formal measures and processes to promote engagement in national review processes to be ineffective, as summarised in the figure 13 below. Particular challenges seem to be a lack of effective online platforms, limited access for persons with disabilities and lack of outreach in different languages, demonstrating that there are still significant gaps in inclusion and participation in national engagement processes.

In a similar trend to the global and regional levels, respondents highlighted that the highest barrier to participation at the national level is the lack of support or resourcing for stakeholder engagement. Again, the areas which are considered to require most improvement are the need for additional funding to support participation and the need for training and support to strengthen the capacity of stakeholders to engage in a holistic follow up and review process.

Fig.13 Please rate the effectiveness of the following elements of the official process in your country:



On the other hand (again reflecting similar trends to the global and regional processes) public communication and the networks for different stakeholders are viewed as the most effective components. In terms of ‘Public Communication of the 2030 Agenda’ 12% of respondents rated this as being ‘Effective’ or ‘Very Effective’. The best result was for the ‘Identification of appropriate networks to reach different types of stakeholders’ where 22% of respondents rated this as being ‘Effective’ or ‘Very Effective’. This suggests that there are attempts at providing *information* through relevant civil society partners but that there are limited opportunities for real *dialogue*. This is particularly significant as the VNRs – reflecting a wider vision of SDG implementation through partnership - purport to be based on a ‘whole of society’ approach which should enable information to be provided from a broad range of sources engaged together in implementation.

2.3.3. Engagement at the national level

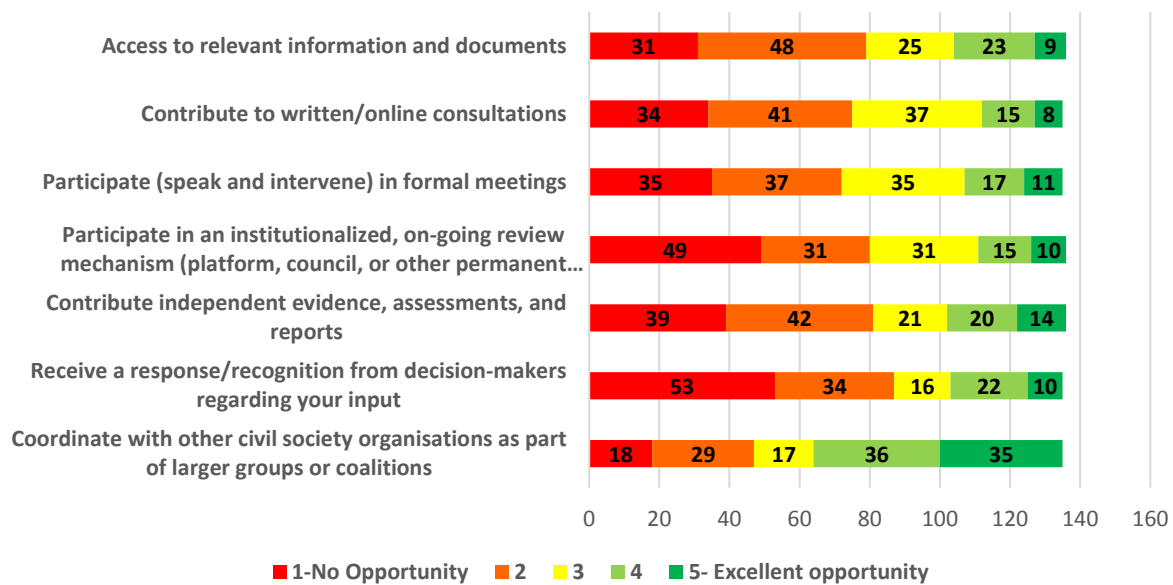
Respondents were asked to assess the opportunities they had had for engagement in follow up and review processes at the national level and as found with global and regional levels, some distinct areas of strength and weakness appear.

The most positive response by far was on the opportunity to coordinate with other civil society organisations, with 51% of respondents indicating that there was ‘Good Opportunity’ and ‘Excellent Opportunity’, in comparison to the next most positive response (contribute independent evidence, assessments, and reports) which received 24% ‘Good Opportunity’ and ‘Excellent Opportunity’

responses. Respondents appear to find engagement outside of formal national processes relatively accessible.

Respondents perceive national level processes to be least open in terms information sharing, engagement, and dialogue. Respondents found that they were most limited in their opportunities to contribute to written/online consultations, to participate in an institutionalized ongoing review mechanism, and to participate in formal meetings. It becomes apparent that engagement between and within stakeholders is viewed positively, but that respondents feel excluded from more institutionalised processes and mechanisms at the national level. This demonstrates how in some cases national civil society coalitions may fill the gap in terms of providing a channel to engage voices of key communities in a country.

Fig.14 Thinking about the level of engagement you have had in the follow up and review and process (including VNRs) at the national level, please respond on how far you have had opportunities to:



3. Recommendations

1. *Information sharing alone is not sufficient: real dialogue with civil society is needed*

There are some positive signs that information is being relatively well-disseminated from the global level meetings of the HLPF, and to a certain extent from the regional and national levels. However, the survey data indicates there are still very limited opportunities for real dialogue. These limitations manifest themselves as obstacles to participation - whether that be opportunities to participate in relevant committees, speak in meetings, and limited feedback to written consultations - and obstacles to accessibility in terms of accreditation, language and disability.

Key recommendations:

- a) Develop a deliberative process at national level with clear expectations for participation, including sufficient time to gather inputs and genuine exchange of views between governments and civil society stakeholders.
- b) Ensure dialogues takes place before, during and *after* review meetings, such as the HLPF.

2. *Make 'Leave No One Behind' a higher priority*

One of the most transformative aspects of the 2030 Agenda is its commitment to 'Leave No One Behind' and to reach the furthest behind first. This survey shows that from the point of view of many civil society organisations, not enough is being done so far to hear the voices of the communities at risk of being left behind and those who work with them. It is crucial that the pledge to 'Leave No One Behind' leads to real change in terms of policy decisions, implementation as well as follow up and review.

Key recommendations:

- a) Ensure that any engagement mechanism should include explicit commitment to engage with the full cross-section of participants in each country
- b) Provide additional support and resources to hear the voices of those who are most often excluded.

3. *Civil society partners demand the right to provide inputs to 'whole of society' reviews*

While a number of opportunities for online engagement are now in place, there is a clear sense from this survey that civil society stakeholders feel they can contribute more. There are many organisations that responded which have specific knowledge and expertise on key aspects of the 2030 Agenda. Limited opportunities for real dialogue mean that their experiences do not seem to be effectively captured by review processes.

Key recommendations:

- a) Ensure that there are more flexible and inclusive ways to include wider inputs from civil society partners and experts within the official review process.
- b) Feature national civil society 'shadow', 'spotlight', or 'parallel' reports alongside the official Voluntary National Reviews.

4. Particular improvements are needed at national and regional level

The results of this survey suggest that the global level review is perceived as having adopted a process which is more inclusive of key stakeholder views than either the regional or national levels. This perception may be due, in part, to the fact that a number of respondents are actively involved in the Major Groups and other Stakeholders and are therefore more engaged in this global dialogue. However there can be little doubt that the follow up and review process is not consistent in each country and the same respondents regard the regional and national levels much less favourably. It is therefore essential to ensure better inclusion of civil society organisations and local community representatives in national and regional processes.

Key recommendations:

- a) Regional mechanisms can be strengthened via peer learning and development of a good practice guide for stakeholder engagement.
- b) National engagement processes can be strengthened via shared learning within the region and improved guidance on national engagement, including building a direct link between SDG review and national planning processes.

5. Establish better links from regional to global level meetings

As set out above, there appears to be more progress in engagement with civil society at the global level. However, the global meeting of the HLPF is not perceived as effectively embedded into a wider ongoing process linking each level of review. There is a need to ensure improvement in the process of gathering inputs and expertise, which starts from the sub-national level and is then collected at national level and shared at regional and global levels.

Key recommendations:

- a) Give greater prominence to feedback from regional commissions at the HLPF
- b) Ensure follow up after the HLPF within each region to share experiences and monitor impact of commitments at national level.

6. *Improve support to stakeholders, including resources and capacity development*

In terms of ensuring inclusion of diverse views, there is a clear need to ensure appropriate support for a wider range of voices to be heard. At the moment, there is a lack of equal opportunities within civil society itself, whereby the larger more well-resourced organisations are able to cover the costs of their own participation at key meetings while smaller grass-roots organisations are either unable to join or unaware of the meetings to begin with.

At the same time, civil society itself needs to consider how to organise to maximise effective access, inclusivity and participation. There are clear opportunities to improve network support and ensure that organisations are able to receive information from relevant civil society partners, including the Major Groups & other Stakeholders.

Key recommendations:

- a) Greater provision of funding for civil society participation, including coordination.
- b) Support to capacity development in key areas such as monitoring of progress, advocacy and external engagement.

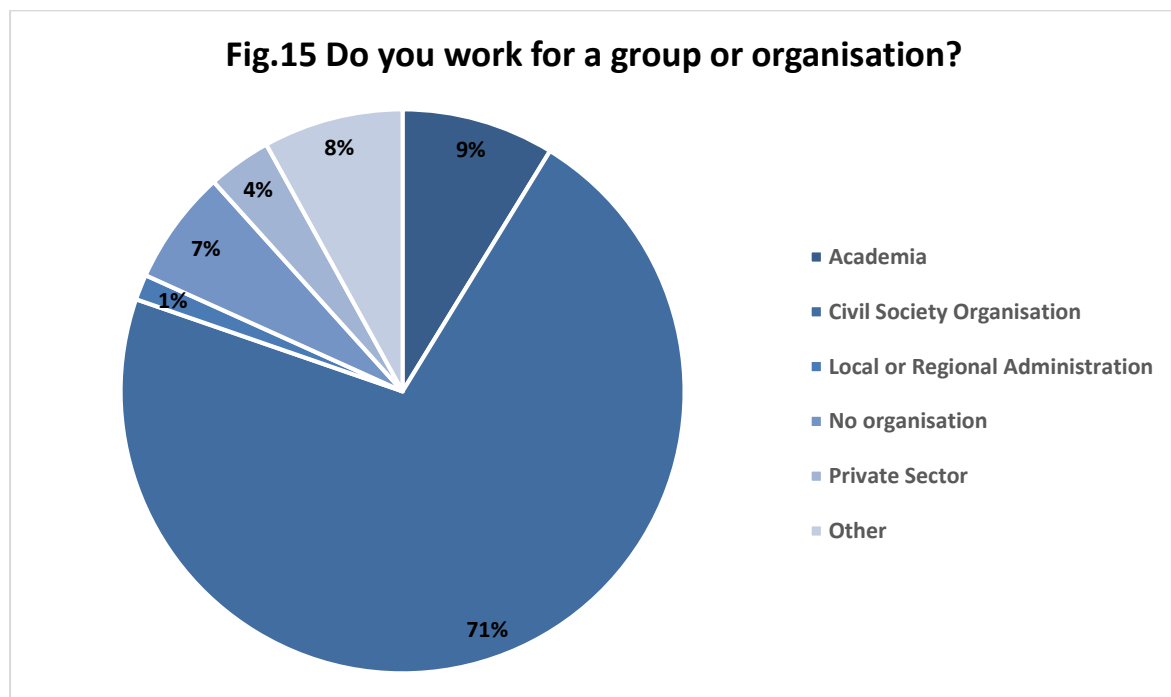
Annex A: Survey Respondents and Methodology

Review of the survey process and respondents

Over the period October-December 2018 this survey was widely distributed to the A4SD networks, including many organisations and coalitions that have been directly involved in their own Voluntary National Reviews and in developing their own civil society reports.

This led to 149 responses from a broad range of civil society organisations; 119 in English, 21 French, 9 Spanish; from 62 countries, with the highest number of responses coming from Nigeria and India.

In terms of the types of organisations, 98 respondents stated that they represented a civil society organisation, 12 were from academia, 11 stated 'other' (including independent consultants and coalitions) and 9 stated 'no organisation'; only 5 respondents stated that they came from a private sector background and 2 from a 'local or regional administration'. Of those who were from a Civil Society Organisation (CSO), unsurprisingly the vast majority self-defined as 'development organisations' although there were also a number of responses from representatives of faith-based organisations, as well as indigenous and womens' rights groups.

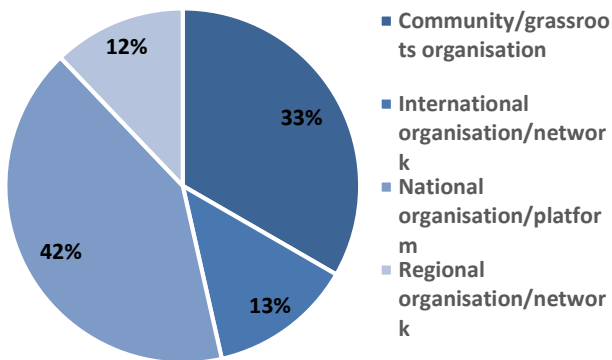


(140 responses)

As can be seen in Figs 16 and 17 below, in terms of the remit of these CSOs, there are a higher number of responses from national (41.5%) and community level organisations (33.5%), while only 12% define themselves as being from a regional organisation or network and 13% from a global organisation or network. In addition, almost a third of respondents (30.5%) came from an organisation with fewer than 5 employees, and nearly half of all respondents (48.5%) came from an organisation with between 5-19 employees; 13% came from organisations with between 20-100 employees and only 8% came from organisations with more than 100 employees.

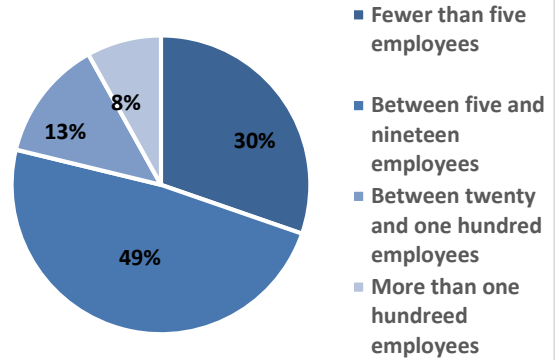
Action for Sustainable Development as a platform is primarily made up of smaller national and community based CSOs, and Fig. 16 and 17 below reinforce this: characterisation of respondents.

Fig.16 My civil society organisation is primarily a:



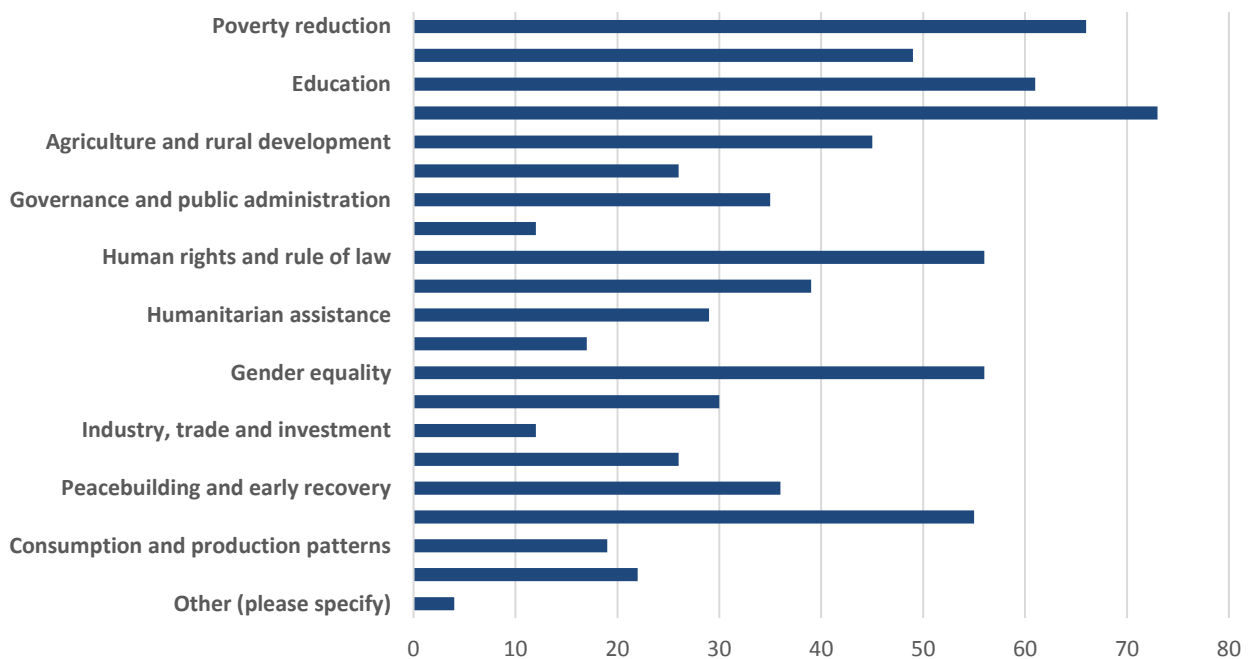
(99 responses)

Fig.17 Civil Society Organisation membership



Finally in terms of their specific focus area, the largest number of CSO respondents stated that they work on 'poverty reduction', however there are also significant numbers who specialise in 'environment and sustainable development' as well as 'education', 'health', 'human rights and the rule of law', 'gender equality' and 'culture & development' (as shown in Fig. 18 below – 99

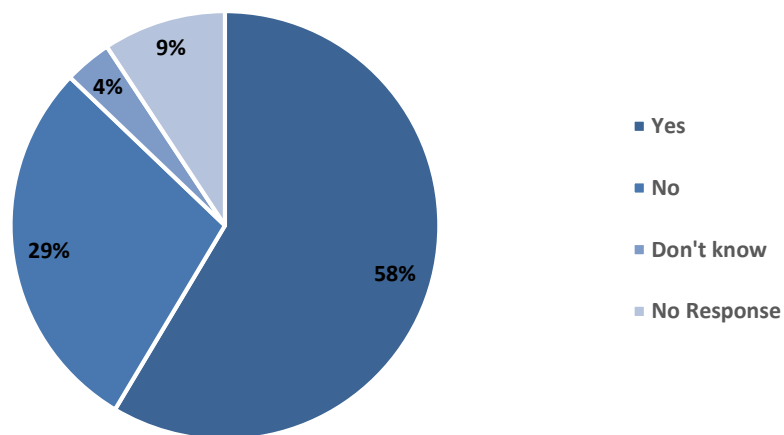
Fig.18 In which areas does your civil society organization specialize?



responses)

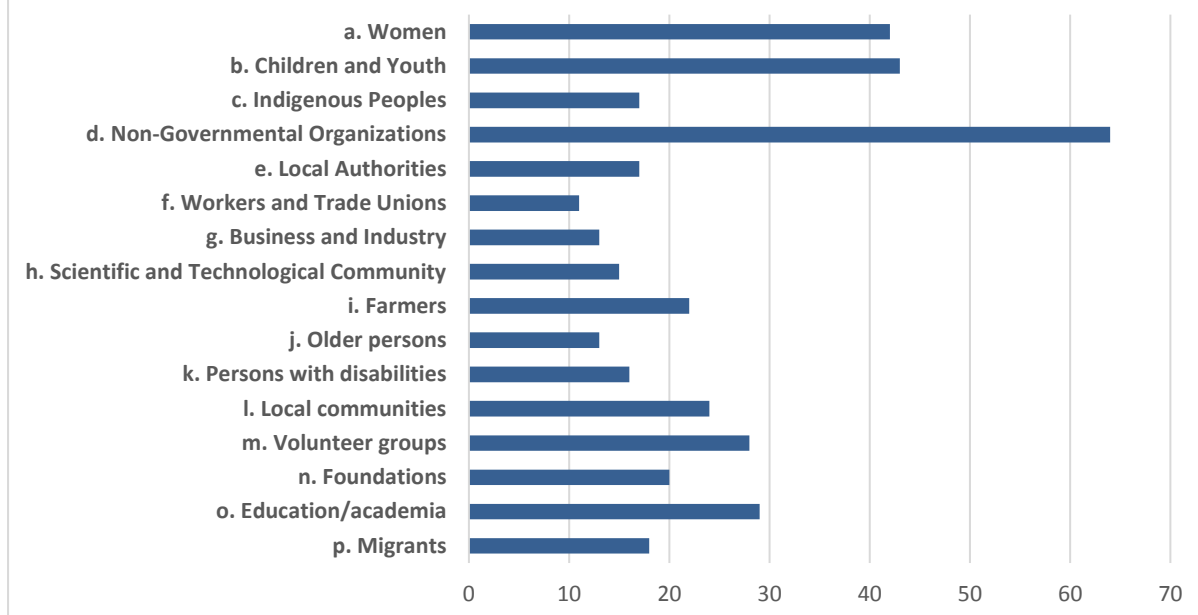
Many of the respondents are actively involved in the Major Groups & Other Stakeholders, nearly 60% stated that they do engage with the Major Groups & Other Stakeholders mechanism at the UN, however nearly 30% do not engage with this formal process and the remaining respondents stated that they 'Don't know' or gave no response. Of those who do engage with the Major Groups and Other Stakeholders, the highest number of respondents came from those who are linked to the constituencies of Women, Children & Youth, NGOs, Education, Volunteer groups, Local communities and Farmers, although many seem to be affiliated to more than one group.

Fig.19 At the global level, does your organisation engage with the official UN follow up and review process via the Major Groups and other Stakeholders mechanism?



(127 responses)

Fig.20 If yes, please indicate which groups you engage through:



(93 responses)

The majority of respondents were from countries that have carried out a VNR in the first 3 years of delivery including 17% in 2016, 24% in 2017 and 22% 2018. However 43% were from countries that have not carried out a VNR and a number of these countries are set to present their VNR in 2019.

Country	2016	2017	2018
Albania			X
Algeria			
Armenia			X
Bangladesh		X	
Belgium		X	
Benin		X	X
Bhutan			X
Brazil		X	
Bulgaria			
Burkina Faso			
Burundi			
Cambodia			
Cameroon			
Canada			
Central African Republic			
China	X		
Colombia	X		X
Costa Rica		X	
Democratic Republic of Congo			
Denmark		X	
Egypt	X		X

France	X		
Gambia			
Germany	X		
Ghana			
Greece			
Guatemala		X	
India		X	
Indonesia		X	
Iraq			
Ireland			X
Israel			
Kenya		X	
Laos			X
Liberia			
Mauritania			
Mexico	X		X
Mozambique			
Nepal		X	
Netherlands		X	
Nicaragua			
Niger			X
Nigeria		X	
Pakistan			
Palestine			
Philippines	X		
Rwanda			
Sierra Leone	X		
South Africa			
Sri Lanka			X
Sudan			X
Switzerland	X		X
Tchad			
Thailand		X	
Togo	X	X	X
Uganda	X		
Ukraine			
United Kingdom			
United States of America			
Uzbekistan			
TOTAL (62)	11	15	14

Methodology and limitations

It is important to highlight that this was an informal survey, based on perceptions from a broad range of stakeholders and organizations in different countries, and this poses limitations to both the rigour and the generalisability of the conclusions. Here, we note some limitations of the survey methodology and the resulting analysis, which should be borne in mind in interpreting the results and which might also inform future surveys.

- The survey was disseminated in three languages: English, French, and Spanish. This allowed more results to be gathered from non-English speaking countries but also clearly limits access to the questionnaire from countries where these languages are not as widely or fluently spoken. Therefore there is inevitable selectivity and bias in who the survey reached and who was best placed to respond. To an extent, this is unavoidable, though it is something that future surveys might look to further ameliorate or compensate for.
- This survey was disseminated online via Action for Sustainable Development's mailing list to over 2,400 civil society members, including regional and national networks as well as community-based organisations and activists. As such, only civil society stakeholders with digital and internet access were able to respond. The results can in no way reflect the views of civil society groups without internet access.
- The survey gave respondents the option of skipping questions without providing an answer, meaning that several questions have an uneven number of overall responses. It also means that the capability of comparison across questions is limited.
- As this report primarily utilises descriptive data in bar chart and pie chart form, the statistical accuracy of the data itself is not especially problematic. However, if data were to be compared across questions it would require statistical accuracy measures for any meaningful conclusions to be drawn.
- The survey received 149 responses from 62 countries. By far the majority of responses are from Africa-based respondents, followed by Asia-based respondents, with the least responses coming from North America. Responses should therefore be understood in light of these weightings and conclusions may be skewed by region-specific issues.