



## PRESS RELEASE

### “Shadowing SDG-implementation”

#### A Civil Society spotlight on to make governments accountable for their promises

Are governments genuinely committed to implement the ambitious Agenda 2030 they adopted last September at the highest level? Will the global financial system and the trade and investment regime allow for the policy space needed to change course, eradicate poverty, reduce inequalities, protect nature and promote human rights?

As the United Nations started this Monday, July 11 2016 its first review of the new Agenda and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), civil society coalitions from around the world brought to New York their own findings, demanding to be heard.

The findings of several of these national reports will be published today at the United Nations, together with the launch of a [“Spotlight” report](#) that examines these issues at a global level.

“We should not be talking any more about domestic or home affairs on the one hand and foreign affairs on the other” commented Juerg Staudenmann from Alliance Sud, the coalition of Swiss development NGOs. “They are now one and the same. All action needs to be assessed with regard to its impact in the world, not just on one specific country only.” The civil society report for Switzerland highlights, precisely, the negative impact on developing countries of the secrecy of the Swiss banking system, which encourages damaging tax evasion, corruption and illicit financial flows.

Shadow reporting is a well-established tool of civil society when it comes to holding governments accountable. Since implementation of the 2030 Agenda is just starting, the main focus in the alternative reports presented is to devise and discuss methodologies and indicators, to monitor governments’ efforts on drafting national strategies and to identify obstacles that can impede progress towards the SDGs.

"There are obstacles for the accomplishment of various SDGs and their targets in the Mexican framework for the energy sector," explained Areli Sandoval, from Equipo Pueblo. The Mexican constitution has been reformed “to prioritize hydrocarbons over any other use of the lands concerned”.

Sandoval expressed concerns “about the lack of human rights and sustainability approach in some aspects of the current Mexican legislation, policies and programmes.” She mentioned examples regarding policies on food, housing, sexual and reproductive health, security and drugs.

Sandoval's demand for “meaningful civil society participation in the design of the national implementation plan and the SDGs national indicators and follow up mechanism” echoes what many other civil society coalitions want to happen in their countries.

In Egypt the new development strategy was not discussed by parliament or through public participation, informs Mahinour El Badrawi, from the Egyptian Center for Economic and Social Rights. She explains that although the Government presents itself as “ a leading country in the 2030 development process, and participates in the National Voluntary Review Process, its plan lacks measurable indicators for success, a road map for reaching its goals, or even consistency between rhetoric and implementation. For example, although the 2014 constitution sets a minimum spending level on Health and Education, the 2016-2017 public budget does not meet that minimum, nor is it recognized as a goal in the Government’s 2030 Vision. The plan also relies heavily on public private partnerships without attempting any reform that reverses the decades of crony capitalism and corrupt institutional practices that have resulted in economic crisis, impoverishment, and public unrest since 2011.

Fiscal issues were also raised by the report from Social Watch Philippines, asserting that “tax injustice is imbedded in the system and as a result unregulated corporate activities harm people and the environment”. Marivic Raquiza explains that “while more than 26.3 percent or about 27 million Filipinos live in poverty, the benefits from growth are concentrated in the hands of few billionaire families, the less than 1 percent who dominate the political economy”.

Wolfgang Obenland introduced the German civil society report, a result of the joint efforts of the national coalitions of environmental and development NGOs. “According to the 2030 Agenda, no country can consider itself having achieved sustainable development” he explained. “We need to move away from the notion that Germany is a trendsetter regarding sustainability. In large areas, this country is not a pioneer, but is severely lagging behind. The world does not expect Germany to be a pioneer, but it expects that we finally acknowledge the urgent need for action that exists with respect to our agricultural, trade, and transport policies and in many other areas. And that we draw meaningful consequences from this.” He found it ironic that, as a result of the accounting of support to refugees as part of official development assistance, “in 2015 the number one recipient of German ODA was... Germany”.

Roberto Bissio, from Social Watch, summarized the contributions of many NGO coalitions that could not come to New York to present their findings personally. He cited the Peruvian report as illustrative of the dilemmas in many countries: “Peru has experienced sustained economic growth, due largely to rising prices of gold, copper and other minerals, but virtually the entire territory has been given in concession to mining, oil, and logging companies, frequently in conflict with local populations. Income poverty has decreased, but multidimensional poverty has worsened. Progress has been made in circulation of money and electronic and telephone connectivity, but increased levels of crime are taking over streets and cities and corruption resulting from the influence of corporate power reaches every part of the government”.

Thus, in the words of Héctor Béjar, “the road to achieving the 2030 goals is hazy and full of obstacles.”

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