Urban Poor Constituency Intervention on VNR

For the longest time the urban poor have been excluded in the VNR processes and always just at the receiving end of the policies. Even with the civic spaces presented by these mechanisms, the urban poor are often left unheard.

There is a huge disconnect between what is being reported on the VNRs and the actual conditions of the people. The policies that are being passed based on these reports do not help the people but instead put the burden on them, especially the vulnerable sector like the urban poor.

When we talk about data gaps we should also consider qualitative data. The people initiated data gathering process should be included in the final VNR reports. The government is missing a lot when they are not engaging with civil society. We bear the brunt of this failed system, and therefore, we are in the best position to identify our solutions and recommendations.

Some unseen injustices such as attack on civic freedoms, land grabbing impacting indigenous peoples and small farmers, evictions and demolitions of urban poor communities, environmental crimes, financial crimes etc. are not reported. Governments tend to report only progress on socio-economic targets. Equity related issues and challenges are unreported in the VNR reports.

The member states must actively seek out and support the participation of the people, especially the marginalized – including women, girls and gender-diverse people in all aspects of development processes – in the creation, implementation, monitoring, follow up, and evaluation of policies and programs. This also includes establishing and maintaining institutionalized spaces at all levels, from local to global where we can effectively participate. We need to adopt a genuinely rights based people-centered development framework.

The SDG implementation must be guided by a people-centered and human rights-based development framework to address the decades-long problem of a market-driven, profit-biased neo-liberal development that hinders the eradication of poverty, inequalities and discrimination.

Let’s not just do things because we have targets that need to be met. These reports are not just data to be printed and to be looked at but these are actual struggles of the people that need to be addressed.