

On session four - the HLPF and APFSD

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Women Constituency
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The United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution to create a High Level Political Forum in pursuance of the outcomes of the Rio+20 Conference to create a Forum to provide political guidance and review the sustainable development commitments and monitor progress. The SG's synthesis report further said that post 2015 development agenda needs to be supported by a review, monitoring and accountability mechanism at three levels, national, regional and global. The HLPF must seek to do away with a weak review mechanism by putting in place a mechanism that enhances political ambition and accountability. It must be a universal, state led, multi tiered and inclusive mechanism. However, it is equally important that such a global mechanism creates a downward accountability mechanism at regional and national level.

Regional Commissions of the United Nations provide best possible opportunity and space for a critical reflection, learning, regional collaboration, political ownership and accountability. In the transition phase, the APFSD has shown a willingness to provide leadership in creating an inclusive space at the Asia Pacific level. However, as the actual task of review and monitoring starts with 2016, the regional commissions must look forward to creating a robust and dynamic review and accountability mechanism, which fosters knowledge sharing, reciprocal learning and promote shared accountability for regional challenges and opportunities.

It must be based on the principles of universality and differentiation, respect to national sovereignty, simplicity, flexibility, transparency and should be anchored in human rights based approach with centrality on poverty eradication, reducing inequality and ensuring inclusion.

It must be accompanied by a structure which is competent to facilitate a meaningful and effective review processes and is not constrained by lack of human resources, expertise and experience and financial resources.

It must look forward to attain objectives of highest political attention and commitment, policy coherence, and strong synergy with downward and upward accountability.

In order to be relevant, the regional review mechanisms must be guided by a substantive Regional Road Map towards sustainable development, which includes regionally relevant issues both within and outside the Post-2015 Development Agenda. These must include assessment of impact of trade, technology and investments on the sustainability. The road map must be based on development justice anchored in redistributive justice, economic justice, social and gender justice, environmental justice and accountability.

It must allow widest possible stakeholders participation at all levels as laid down in the HLPF Resolution and ensure principle of non-regression in civil society participation. It must take lessons from the experience of other regional commissions such as African Peer Review Mechanism (AFPRM), and from other relevant mechanisms such as UPR, OECD-DAC etc. and further improve upon them with the experience. It must include strong accountability, grievance and redress mechanisms for individuals when their rights are violated.

We call on the APFSD to recognize the significant contributions of civil societies in advancing development justice. We urge the APFSD to respect and support the efforts of civil society to self-organize and select our representatives to effectively communicate our views and contributions to the agenda of the forum. We note with concern the constricting space for civil society participation in this process and we hope that the principle of non-regression is upheld, moving forward.

While positive, the proposal for future APFSD put by the ESCAP Secretariat still falls short in embodying the spirit of the HLPF resolution, SG's synthesis paper, and building on the experience of available review mechanism for sustainable development and creating enabling conditions.

We urge the Commission to create a strong synergy between the Commission and APFSD to make it an effective platform for review and accountability, if we are to leave no one behind.

Thank you !