

National Civil Society Coalitions on the Sustainable Development Goals - A Mapping

Findings and Recommendations

March 2018

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for Development
and Environment

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Together 2030 is grateful to all colleagues that participated in this first survey on national CSO coalitions on the SDGs.

NATIONAL CIVIL SOCIETY COALITIONS ON THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS - A MAPPING

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1. INTRODUCTION

As a global civil society initiative, Together 2030¹ focuses on the implementation and accountability of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at all levels. As such, Together 2030, in partnership with the Norwegian Forum for Development and the Environment (ForUM), coordinated a survey with partners and focal points in national civil society coalitions working on the follow up and implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The **overall objective** of this exercise was to identify examples of how civil society is organizing to promote and follow up on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda at the national level and to use this review to facilitate the creation and strengthening of bonds among coalitions through peer learning and information exchange to increase capacities to hold governments accountable for the commitments made in the 2030 Agenda.

2. METHODOLOGY

The survey gathered information on existing national CSO coalitions following up and engaging in the implementation of the SDGs at the national level.

The Together 2030 Core Group members (Sightsavers, World Vision, Cepei, Save Matabeleland, PhilSEN, JDPC Ijebu-Ode, Leonard Cheshire Disability) were consulted and supported the identification of contacts and focal points at national level to be invited to participate at the survey. In addition to collecting inputs from the Together 2030 Core Group, the International Secretariat reached out to other strategic partners to strengthen the scope of coalitions to be included in the mapping exercise.

After several rounds of editing, a final online questionnaire with key questions for SDG coalitions was drafted and tested to ensure satisfactory usability. The Secretariat reached out to 39 identified focal points from different regions: Africa, Asia/Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, Europe, and North America. The focal points were chosen as they work in some capacity with national coalitions focused on SDG implementation. From this survey, an initial mapping of national CSO coalitions on the SDGs was collected. A summary of these findings is below, which includes a breakdown of organizations, a synthesis of responses, key challenges and gaps, and recommendations on how Together 2030 can support the work of national CSO coalitions working on the SDGs.

The survey produced **34 responses** from a variety of CSOs with widespread geographic balance. Survey responses were analyzed according to categories, including by geographic distribution, organization and

¹ [Together 2030](#) is a global, action-oriented initiative aiming to generate and share knowledge on the implementation and accountability of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals, and project the voices of different civil society and stakeholders around the world on the challenges and opportunities of implementing this Agenda.

sector, SDG implementation tracking, coalition factors, HLPF involvement, and connections between coalitions. Details are below.

Table 1. Geographic Distribution of Responses

Thirty-four responses were received from Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Europe, and Latin America from 33 countries with India having two responses. Representation was from the following regions and countries:

- **Africa (9 countries):** Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, Liberia, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Togo, and Zimbabwe
- **Americas (6 countries):** Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, and Peru
- **Asia/Pacific (8 countries):** Bangladesh, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Japan, Kenya, Nepal, Philippines, and Republic of Korea
- **Europe (10 countries):** Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Ireland, Latvia, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom

2.1 Organizations Responding

Three branches of Caritas responded, as did three branches of Sightsavers. Otherwise, responses were from distinct organizations. Responses were received from representatives of: Africa Philanthropic Foundation, All Together in Dignity - ATD Ireland, Alliance Sud, Asociacion Chilena de ONG Accion, Canadian Council for International Co-operation, Caritas Congo, Caritas Liberia, Caritas Sierra Leone, Cepei, Civil Society Coalition on Sustainable Development, CNCD-11.11.11, Concord Sweden, Norwegian

Forum for Development and Environment, German NGO Forum on Environment and Development, Gestos, Global Call to Action Against Poverty (GCAP) Kenya, International NGO Forum on Indonesian Development (INFID), Japan Civil Society Network on SDGs, Korea SDGs Network, Latvian Platform for Development Cooperation, NGO Federation of Nepal, Pacific Islands Association of NGOs, Peruvian Campaign for the Right to Education, Philippine Social Enterprise Network, Portuguese NGDO Platform, Poverty Reduction Forum Trust, Sightsavers, The Danish 92 Group, Togo CSOs working group on SDGs, Union Nacional de Instituciones para el Trabajo de Accion Social (UNITAS), Wada Na Todo Abhiyan, and the WWF (World Wildlife Fund for Nature, as co-chair of the Bond SDGs Group).

2.2 Limitations and importance of the survey

One of the main limitations refers to the small sample and thus not fully representative of national CSOs coalitions engaging in SDG implementation. The survey was shared with people identified by the Together 2030 Core Group and Secretariat and this may bring some bias in terms of countries and issues prioritized in the responses. However, this also reflects the novelty and lack of information about national coalitions working on the SDGs - a gap this survey tried to address. Another bias is that the respondents were identified based on the assumption of an existing national CSO coalition in their country, so the data will not be a proxy of the percentage of national CSO coalitions on the SDGs all over the world.

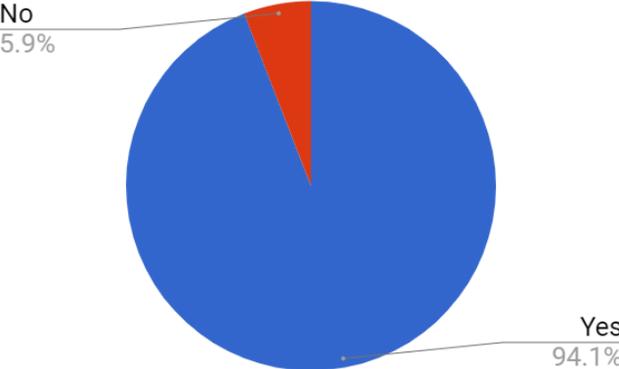
The findings gathered from this survey are important since there is little research on national CSO coalitions engaging in SDG implementation at national and local levels. The information gathered from this exercise could provide new and pertinent perspectives on how national coalitions could be more effective in holding national governments accountable in SDG implementation, main challenges and moreover, how Together 2030 and other international networks and development partners could assist in supporting the work of national CSO coalitions working on the SDGs.

3. DATA AND ANALYSIS

3.1 National CSO coalitions Tracking of SDG Implementation

Almost all (32 or 94 percent) of the respondents responded positively to the question “*Is there a national civil society coalition (CSO) or any network actively working on tracking the implementation of the SDGs in your country?*”

Figure 1. Is there a National CSO Working on SDGs?



Only two respondents responded negatively. Those two respondents were both asked why they thought “A national CSO coalition has not been established to track the SDGs in your country.” and were asked to select “all applicable” from a set of possible reasons.

Both respondents agreed that “lack of leadership from CSOs in setting up a coalition,” “lack of capacity of CSOs to set up a national SDG coalition,” and “lack of resources from CSOs to track the SDG implementation” were factors. The following factor was selected by one of the two respondents: “lack of capacity from CSOs to track the SDGs.” One of the two respondents provided her/his own explanation for the lack of a coalition by pointing out that they have their own working group at their platform, in addition to the reasons provided in the survey.

**Table 2. Factors Explaining Why a Tracking Coalition Was Not Set Up
(for the two cases where it was not)**

Factor	Number of Respondents Listing Factor
Lack of leadership from CSOs in setting up a coalition	2
Lack of capacity of CSOs to set up a national SDG coalition	2
Lack of resources from CSOs to track the SDG implementation	2
Lack of capacity from CSOs to track the SDGs	1
Other responses	2

3.2 The establishment of national CSO coalitions on the SDGs

Regarding the question “Do you think there should/could be a national CSO coalition focusing on the SDGs in your country? What would be needed for a national coalition to be established?” two responses were received.

One of the respondents indicated that it would be difficult to have a national CSO coalition due to the size and diversity of the country and lack of inter-connectivity. To address this, political will is needed to assign national resources and back the demand of foreign resources from CSOs. In addition, a clear follow-up national plan with priority SDG indicators must be established. Since the SDGs are all encompassing the respondent considered it challenging to begin this process.

Another respondent indicated that many CSOs are working on SDGs issues and are willing to track implementation, yet they are working in siloes. In this context, a national coalition would be possible and desirable in order to define a framework to harmonize the various CSOs and their focus, yet, there is a lack of coordination and no broader CSO coordination mechanism or meetings. In addition, many CSOs are hesitant to change the current way of working. Effective leadership, good will, and financial resources are needed to establish a coalition or network.

Table 3. Reasons why a national CSO coalitions does not exist and what would be needed to set it up

<i>Reasons given on why national CSO Coalitions do not exist</i>	<i>What is needed to set up CSO Coalitions?</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of leadership from CSOs in setting up a coalition; • Lack of capacity from CSOs to track the SDGs; • Lack of capacity of CSOs to set up a 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political leadership is needed to foster the establishment of CSO Coalitions; • National and foreign resources are required; • A better explanation of the complex nature of the SDGs as well as the review and monitoring mechanisms would facilitate CSO engagement

Table 3. Reasons why a national CSO coalitions does not exist and what would be needed to set it up

<i>Reasons given on why national CSO Coalitions do not exist</i>	<i>What is needed to set up CSO Coalitions?</i>
<p>national SDG coalition;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lack of resources from CSOs to track the SDG implementation; ● Among other reasons, were the lack of knowledge on the SDGs from the population and that CSOs consider it political to engage with the SDGs. 	<p>more easily;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The coordination among CSOs working on SDGs is key; ● Guidance and information on the framework and mechanism with clear roles for CSOs are required; ● Setting up a coalition requires “outside-the-box” thinking and actions - and in order to take this step, leadership, goodwill, and financial resources are necessary.

3.3 Genesis and Structure of the Coalition

The 32 respondents who answered in the affirmative to the previous question were asked a follow-up question of “*How was this coalition structured/set up?*” There were five possible responses here, as well as the ability to enter a different response. Fifteen respondents indicated that it was follow up from a national coalition established during the post-2015 process. Seven indicated that it was a new coalition set up after the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals by the United Nations. Three said that it was a working group or task force within a broader national CSO coalition. Two said that it was a coalition established to prepare for the Voluntary National Review (VNR) at the United Nations High-level Political Forum (HLPF). Finally, five respondents gave a response other than the five possibilities provided.

Table 4. How the Coalition was Structured/Set Up	
<i>Description</i>	<i>Number of Respondents Listing Description</i>
Follow up from a national coalition established during the post-2015 process	15 (47%)
New coalition set up after the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals by the United Nations	7 (22%)
Working group or task force within a broader national CSO coalition	3 (9%)
Coalition established to prepare for the Voluntary National Review at the HLPF	2 (6%)
Other responses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emerged from regional platforms for national NGOs • Emerged from the consensus among human rights activists and social action groups who were part of the World Social Forum 2004 • Set up to make the government accountable to its promise to end poverty and social discrimination 	5 (16%)

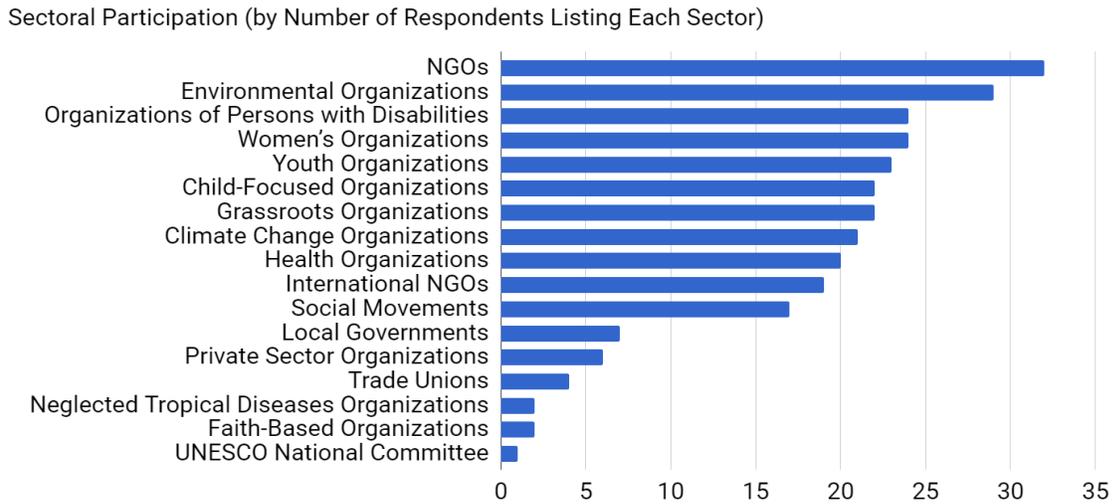
3.4 Sectoral Participation in the National CSO Coalition on SDGs

The 32 respondents with a national coalition were asked what sectors participate in the coalition. Respondents listed multiple sectors, as shown in the following table.

Table 5. Sectoral Participation

<i>Sector</i>	<i>Number of Respondents Listing Sector</i>
NGOs	32
Environmental Organizations	29
Organizations of Persons with Disabilities	24
Women's Organizations	24
Youth Organizations	23
Child-Focused Organizations	22
Grassroots Organizations	22
Climate Change Organizations	21
Health Organizations	20
International NGOs	19
Social Movements	17
Local Governments	7
Private Sector Organizations	6
Trade Unions	4
Neglected Tropical Diseases Organizations	2
Faith-Based Organizations	2
UNESCO National Committee	1

Figure 2. Sectoral Participation (by Number of Respondents Listing Each Sector)



3.5 High-level Political Forum and Voluntary National Reviews

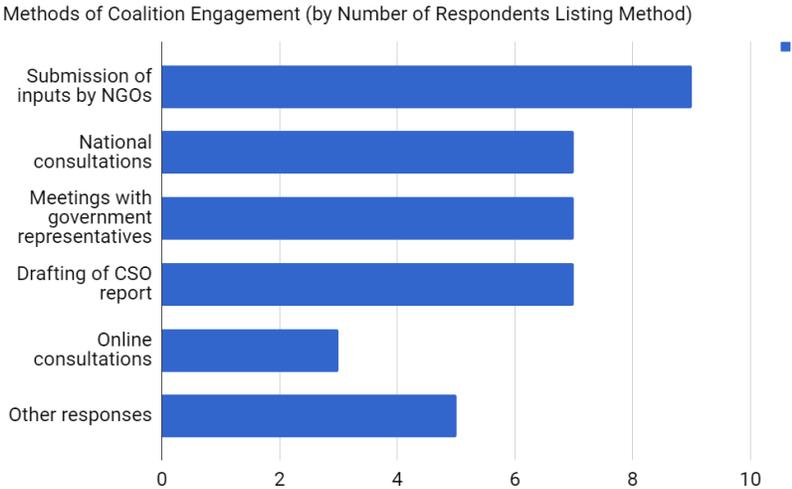
Respondents were asked if their country had already volunteered to present a Voluntary National Review (VNR) at the UN High Level Political Forum (HLPF). Twenty-nine respondents (85%) said yes, four (12%) said no, and one said s/he did not know (3%).

3.6 CSO Engagement in the Voluntary National Reviews

Respondents were asked how they were preparing for their Voluntary National Reviews. Responses are provided in the following table.

Table 6. Methods of Coalition Engagement with VNR processes	
<i>Method</i>	<i>Number of Respondents Listing Method</i>
Submission of inputs by NGOs	9
National consultations	7
Meetings with government representatives	7
Drafting of CSO report	7
Online consultations	3
Other responses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In some responses, it was a combination of the methods listed above • In some instances, the VNR process has just started • A national consultation platform convened by government, funded by UNDP, and is multisectoral • National CSOs were involved in several levels, they had meetings with government representatives, and asked to report on the VNR report and at the country VNR presentation at the UN 	5

Figure 3. Methods of Coalition Engagement with VNR processes (by Number of Respondents Listing Method)



3.7 Connections between National Coalitions

Respondents were asked if they were interested in connecting with national coalitions from other countries via Together 2030. Twenty-nine (91%) respondents indicated they were interested in connecting with any country, and one said only with countries in the same region. One said that s/he was only interested in connecting with other countries that are industrialized, and one could not say at the time of the survey.

4. Key Challenges and Gaps

Respondents added some information on national CSO coalitions on the SDGs in their countries. The information provided was very useful in the identification of key challenges and gaps. Those are summarized below.

- Although many CSOs coalitions indicated that they are interconnected and also connected with the government, many are seeking ways to collaborate with the private sector in achieving the SDGs.
- The need to promote the full and effective participation of persons with disabilities in decision-making processes was highlighted.
- The importance of media as a tool in carrying out the SDGs was considered important.
- There is a need to develop reliable monitoring and data in non-traditional ways to raise the representation and points of view of people living in poverty as well as CSOs.
- It is critically important to track SDG implementation nationally, and currently some countries are working on many initiatives, although this process is limited to online tools, so does not reach community-based organizations.
- While some civil society networks engage with the government and international organizations, there is also a need to expand the networks to ensure connections with local governments.
- Some CSOs highlighted that language can be a barrier in two ways: (1) internationally-produced documents are not available in national languages and (2) nationally-produced documents are not available in English.
- In some cases, there is a lack of awareness of the government structure and the role of each government branch with regards to SDG implementation and accountability.
- There is a challenge in knowing how to engage with the right partners in national dialogues.
- The different UN mechanisms that track the implementation of the SDGs can be overwhelming for CSOs.
- Some respondents indicated that the SDGs do not reach people at the grassroots level, which prevents their participation in SDG implementation. Consequently, the SDGs need to be connected to sub-national and local-level communities and at the same time national aspirations and advocacy need to be linked to regional and global levels.
- Public space needs to be open so national plans can be debated in a participatory manner.

5. Recommendations for Together 2030

The following section provides a summary of the recommendations from survey respondents on how Together 2030, as an international initiative, could support the work of national CSO coalitions working on the SDGs.

The responses reflect the perspectives from respondents but some may not necessarily be in alignment with the focus, priorities and capacities of the Together 2030 Initiative.

Respondents considered that Together 2030 could:

- Put an emphasis on sharing information and knowledge and providing capacity building.
- Connect with national CSO coalitions and organize relevant programs together at the country level.
- Provide financial support to implement programs and advocacy at the national level.
- Support the work of CSO coalitions by facilitating linkages with other similar platforms for learning and best-practice sharing to foster collaboration with like-minded entities to achieve goals and objectives.
- Provide information and support on how to manage such a large platform to carry out adequate advocacy work on all 17 SDGs.
- Provide guidance for engaging with the VNR processes and information on the HLPF, as well as share examples among countries.
- Provide capacity building for members especially on a monitoring strategy of the implementation of SDGs including the data revolution, particularly supporting those in the Global South.
- Organize national-level technical trainings and sessions on how to monitor SDG implementation, produce shadow reports, and provide awareness raising.
- Work to give more visibility to national initiatives and to help rolling them out.
- Help support national NGO platforms gauge the level of open space created by governments in monitoring tools to implement the SDGs.
- Support coalitions in promoting SDG implementation at the local level by encouraging universities to establish SDG centers.
- Promote CSO initiatives from the country level to the global level to understand the achievements and challenges in SDGs implementation.
- Provide case studies on SDG implementation, especially on institutional engagement to help national CSOs establish a new participatory governance system nationally.
- Coordinate and compile different CSO reports to UN mechanisms into one report to have a more significant impact.
- Help lobby and influence national governments to persuade them to have open dialogues with CSOs in a participatory manner in respect to development plans and issues.
- Provide support in establishing parliamentary groups on SDGs, which could strengthen resource allocation, provide oversight on implementation, and engage in follow up and review the implementation of national sustainable development projects and programs.

The recommendations listed above showcase important action identified by actors operating at the national level that could support their work and participation at the follow up and implementation of the SDGs. The findings from this mapping exercise could provide important insights and perspectives on how Together 2030 and other international networks and development partners could most effectively facilitate the creation and strengthening of linkages among national CSO coalitions on the SDGs through peer learning, information exchange, and capacity building. In turn, this could increase national-level capacities to hold governments accountable for the commitments made in the 2030 Agenda to achieve the SDGs.

6. Reflections on the Information Gathered

Drawing on the survey, some reflections on the information gathered follows below.

The majority of the national CSO coalitions on SDGs have grown out of the post-2015 process or are connected with broader national coalitions. **CSO coalitions have a critical need to engage in SDG implementation and a strong interest in doing so.** They would also like to **learn from and engage with each other**, exchange information, and produce and share good practices and lessons learned. Many expressed the **need for financial support** to train staff and to implement the SDGs effectively. They are interested in **establishing better and more effective linkages within regions**, as well as **connecting with global-level mechanisms** to reinforce advocacy messages and to strengthen collaboration. There is a need for more effective leadership within CSO coalitions to achieve the SDGs. Finally, the respondents prominently highlight Together 2030 as the convener and interlocutor which fosters dialogues to improve CSO coalition effectiveness.

There is a clear **need for broader surveys**, potentially in partnership with national CSO coalitions on SDGs, to properly capture the perspectives of particular groups and their level of engagement with national coalitions. Importantly, Together 2030 could consider developing a survey that focuses on the groups most left behind, and analyze if those groups are (or are not) managing to engage in national CSO coalitions. Such a survey would identify the reasons for non-participation and recommendations on how to overcome them.

Together 2030 and other international partners could consider establishing strategies to **support capacity building** of national coalitions, including on how they could become more inclusive.

The need for **financial support** was a strong call for international partners and networks to support. Together 2030 could discuss ways of supporting national CSO coalitions in this regard. Together 2030 could, for instance, support in gathering and disseminating evidence on this financial challenge to help advocate for support.

Together 2030 is in an excellent, unique position to analyze the different structures and operational mechanisms of existing national CSO Coalitions on the SDGs, **gather evidence and technical expertise**, and from this develop guidance to help foster and create and strengthen those coalitions.

There is a clear need for CSO coalitions to have **space to communicate**, exchange ideas, and share good practices. Together 2030 could provide an online platform through its website and invite CSO coalitions to participate in online discussions, perhaps on particular themes, which could ultimately produce thematic reports. Together 2030 could also set up and manage a **CSO coalition listserv** to create a safe space for the exchange of information and learning in which CSO coalitions could interact, amplify their voices, and support national and global campaigns.

Finally, Together 2030 should map the national CSO coalition landscape, as has been done for this report, on a regular basis and involve more countries and different actors. This would ensure inclusivity and accessibility, and address those most left behind.

7. ANNEX – Contact Information of National CSO coalitions (respondents who agreed to share their information)

Country	Name of the SDG coalition/group and website	Contact Person
Bangladesh	Disability Alliance on SDGs-Bangladesh	Khondoker Ariful Islam - kariful@sightsavers.org
Belgium	Perspective2030	Véronique Rigot - veronique.rigot@cncd.be
Bolivia	UNITAS - www.redunitas.org	Susana Eróstegui - direccionunitas@redunitas.org
Brazil	Civil Society Working Group for the 2030 Agenda (http://brasilnaagenda2030.org)	Alessandra Nilo - alessandra.nilo@gestos.org
Chile	ASOCIA 2030 www.proyectoasocia2030.cl	Nicolas Sautejeau - nicolas.sautejeau@accionag.cl
Democratic Republic of Congo	Collectif pour les Objectifs de Développement Durable/Agenda 2030 (CODD2030)	Barega Lombe Thadee - barega_th@yahoo.fr
Fiji	www.piango.org	
Germany	German NGO Forum on Environment and Development	Marie-Luise Abshagen - abshagen@forumue.de
India	Wada Na Todo Abhiyan (WNTA) - Link: www.wadanatodo.net	Annie Namala - annie@cseiindia.org.in
Indonesia	Indonesian CSO Coalition for SDGs (http://www.sdg2030indonesia.org)	Hamong Santono - among@infid.org
Ireland	Coalition 2030 (www.facebook.com/IrishCoalition2030)	Caitriona Rogerson - SDG Project Coordinator, caitriona@ien.ie
Japan	Japan Civil Society Network on SDGs (SDGs Japan)	Masaki Inaba - inaba@sdgs-japan.net
Kenya	SDGs Kenya Forum - www.sdgkenyaforum.org	Florence Syevuo - coordinator@sdgkenyaforum.org
Korea	Korea SDGs Network	Denise K.H. YOON - sdgnetkorea@gmail.com
Latvia	Latvian Platform for Development Cooperation - www.lapas.lv	Inese Vaivare - inese.vaivare@gmail.com
Nepal	Nepal SDGs Forum	Daya Sagar Shrestha - dayasagar@ngofederation.org ; dayasagar2071@gmail.com
Nigeria	Civil Society Coalition on Sustainable Development www.cscsdev.org	Tola Winjobi - tolawinjobi58@yahoo.com
Norway	Norwegian Forum for Development and Environment	Silje Hagerup - silje@forumfor.no
Philippines	United Nations Civil Society Advisory Committee	Gomer Padong - gomerpadong@gmail.com
Portugal	CSO SDG Forum	Pedro Cruz - agenda2030@plataformaongd.pt

Senegal	Civil Society Organisation group for SDG monitoring/CONGAD	Salimata Bocoum – Sbocoum@sightsavers.org - Amadou Cisse - amadousisco@gmail.com
Sierra Leone	Sierra Leone Coalition 2030	Edward Lansana Massaquoi - ediemass@yahoo.com
Sweden	Concord Sweden - www.concord.se	Sofia Svarfvar - sofia.svarfvar@concord.se
Switzerland	Zivilgesellschaftliche Plattform Agenda 2030 für nachhaltige Entwicklung	Sara Frey - mailto:info@plattformagenda2030.ch
Tanzania	Tanzania Sustainable Development Platform (www.maendeleoendelevutz.org)	Stuwart Kitila / Maua Pascal - admin@africaphilanthropic.org ; maua@maendeloendelevutz.org
Zimbabwe	Zimbabwe CSO Reference Group on SDGs www.prftzim.org	Judith Kaulem - judith@prftzim.org

TOGETHER 2030



About Together 2030

Together 2030 (www.together2030.org) is a civil society initiative that promotes national implementation and tracks progress of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Initiative, set up in December 2015, seeks to generate knowledge and project voices from civil society and stakeholders around the world on the challenges and opportunities for the 2030 Agenda.

Together 2030 brings together civil society and non-governmental actors to discuss the way to formulate and implement roadmaps at national level and hold governments to account at all levels.