EAPN Europe & the Sustainable Development Goals, 23 May 2017

Welcome and introductions (Leo Williams, Director, EAPN)

Attendees: Amana Ferro (EAPN Europe), Barbara Carraciolo (Solidar), David Praile + David Sourdeau (EAPN BE), Isabela Cunha (UN DESA), Jiri Sironen (EAPN FI), Krisztina Jasz (EAPN HU), Magda Tancau (EAPN Europe), Matteo Mandelli (EAPN Europe), Naiara Costa (Together 2030), Paul Ginnell (EAPN IE), Paula Cruz + Julio Paiva + Elizabeth Santos + Sérgio Aires (EAPN PT), Sian Jones (EAPN Europe), Maciek Kucharczyk (AGE Platform), Freek Spinnewijn (FEANTSA), Michael Mackey (EAPN IE)?, Rebecca Lee (EAPN Europe).

Reminder of the objectives:

1. **To help EAPN members understand where the** 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGS 'came' from – what was the process?
2. **To help EAPN members understand what the 2030 agenda / SDGs 'contains'**
3. **To help EAPN members understand how they could work with the 2030 agenda / SDGs at the national and regional levels**
4. **To help EAPN members understand what role the 2030 agenda / SDGs could play at the European and national levels.**

The story of the 2030 agenda and the SDGs – the process of how they came about and unique characteristics - was presented by Naiara Costa, Director, International Secretariat Together 2030. See her presentation here.

Additional key points:

- There are 28 references to poverty in all – ending it in all forms (not only absolute poverty).
- This is a universal agenda – for all countries to make internal change.
- In terms of the intergovernmental process: Open Working Group on the SDGs was quite innovative, with 30 seats, each shared between 2-3 government. This meant that if CSOs influenced one government's position, they actually influenced 2-3 at the same time!

What is the 2030 agenda? What are the SDGs?!, - the goals & structures around them, particularly the High-Level Political Forum & review process - was presented by Isabela Cunha, Programme Consultant at the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA). See her presentation here.

Additional key points:

- DESA works on including non-state actors in the goals, and how to translate the SDGs into national policy.
- The national reviews are not legally binding, but voluntary. The special role of non-state actors and governments as main actors should be recognised.
- Need to break from the idea that developing countries need to do the work and have a different mindset.
- Goal 1 to End Poverty is called the overarching goal of the sustainable agenda (unfinished business of the MDGs).
- For CSOs, it's good to look at the interlinkages with goal 1 and other goals – ask yourselves what's your competitive advantage in other goals?

Discussion

Q: How will the statistical commission deal with data? AGE Platform deals with the issue of availability of data on older people, which stops around age 65 in the EU; age 75 at the UN. AGE wrote to the World data forum (UN) last year asking to include those beyond aged 75. What about this issue of capturing the oldest old?

A: The negotiating phase emphasized disaggregated data (need to know about everyone). There is a stakeholder group on ageing who can be contacted. Data is a big challenge which was brought up to an interagency expert group – a group of statisticians which created the indicators for the targets and who will keep on looking at this. There is a need to continue to bring up this issue. The High Level Political Forum does work with older people, so visibility is increasing.

Naiara: Data is a crucial point. There are global indicators but national/regional ones will be developed and need to be watched. Also, there is a need to incorporate data from Civil Society in the reports. There is some concern of loss of the human rights side.

Q: How do the SDGs link to existing UN instruments, such as the UN convention on rights for disabilities? The EU has to comply with this convention & others. Can we use these?

A: The 2030 Agenda should not duplicate what already exists. The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) does a great job and others looking to them.

More sources:

SDG Indicators:
https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/Official%20Revised%20List%20of%20global%20SDG%20indicators.pdf

http://www.data4sdgs.org/

How EAPN members have been working with the SDGs

Jiri Sironen from EAPN Finland presented the context in Finland, NGOs' involvement & EAPN FI actions. See his presentation here.

More sources:

10 minutes video in English on the NGOs and CSOs role in the 2030 Agenda in Finland:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DwNwGGkIlao&feature=youtu.be&list=PLdLTLlRMRBfjGOFmAaUaWL32ubknmkdXd

Finnish CSOs' recommendations for Finland's Agenda2030 implementation plan:
https://www.kepa.fi/tiedostot/agenda-2030cso-recommendationsfinland.pdf

Freek Spinnewijn, of FEANTSA presented how the organisation uses the SDGs in their lobbying work:

There is lots of work to be done for the SDGs to be taken seriously in the EU. A European action programme is needed and it's clear that the EU picks & chooses. E.g. Goal 1 is left out as if extreme poverty is not an issue. Vice-President Timmermans is leading this work and has said literally that extreme poverty's an issue of the past. It is easy for us to use SDGs to put pressure on the EU but difficult to work at UN level. The EU-level initiative on data is again a pick-&-choose affair.

Another agenda that has a potential link is the Urban Agenda – UN-adopted agenda from last year inspired by the SDGs and on which the EU agenda should be based. There is a need for stronger links.

What FEANTSA does is use these frameworks to influence EU policy. Members are involved at national level but FEANTSA concentrates on the EU-transposition. The post-2020 strategy will be important.

What role could/should the 2030 Agenda/SDGs play at the European and national level?
Barbara Carraciolo, Solidar / SDG Watch Europe Steering Committee member, presented the opportunities the Agenda/SDGs hold for policy coherence, accountability & usefulness for lobbying work. See her presentation here.

Additional points:

What has the EU done since adoption?: In December 2015 & the months before, people from different sectors came together on how to make it a reality and said that the EU should have its own overarching plan, but not much has happened since then. The EC hasn't adopted this as yet. The EC has outlined the following steps:

1. In November 2016 there was a communication: next steps for sustainable Europe, with a document attached explaining how what's already in place contributes to the goals. The EC commits to mainstreaming these goals.
2. To promote regular monitoring & reporting.
3. To set up a multi-stakeholder platform to exchange on good practices on implementation, with elements up to 2020. Again, not much has happened here.

The SDG Watch tackles these gaps. SDG Watch is a coalition of 80 organisations from across different sectors & is currently having meetings with national organisations on the agenda.

SDG Watch has provided the following recommendations for the Council conclusions this June on the above communication: 1. The EU should have an overarching strategy & action plan; 2: We need serious policy coherence for sustainable dev – also internally; 3: We need a multi-stakeholder platform including CSOs; 4: EU monitoring needs to be robust; 5: Resources need to be allocated.

The Multi-Annual Financial Framework is currently being reviewed – opportunity to apply for resources.

For EAPN, what role could/should the 2030 Agenda/SDGs play at the European and national level?

Sian Jones, EAPN Policy Coordinator, presented the context and some issues to take into account for EAPN's work:

There is a commitment to move forward on a social sustainable EU model. EAPN has been active in the SDG Watch, the EESC SDG observatory, and has attended specific meetings e.g. Eurostat meeting on 100 EU level indicators. As a network, we feed back through the EU ISG policy group & have had some initial discussions but lack a space to have detailed discussion. This is why we've included it in our conference now in June.

The Agenda coincides with EAPN messages and has UN backing and can be more coherent and a natural step from the European Pillar of Social Rights. The risks however is a lack of commitment

(Juncker doesn't mention it). It's not just about policy coherence across domains but a different model of growth. The governance is unclear & how it connects to the national level – how to not duplicate work. EAPN members can't engage in all processes. Participation feels marginal at the moment. There is the EU level Multi Stakeholder Forum but will there be mainstreaming? This reflects similar concerns with other mechanisms and comes as no surprise. We need to learn from national members & EO members on what our priorities should be & how to link agendas.

Discussion

- As EAPN we need to focus on a new vision of growth.
- Finland seems to be a good practice case: can we know about other countries? (Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Switzerland, Germany have all been traditionally strong on the agenda and on participation)
- EAPN should make sure that the EU action plan doesn't discount extreme poverty. There's an issue of definition: the UN indicator is an old definition of people earning less than 1:25$ a day which is not a good measure in Europe. The homeless are a big enough group to provide a decent measure, but it needs an indicator & political commitment.
- There's a coalition of 100 organisations ('coalition 2030') in Ireland to lobby for an all-government approach and implementation plan, but this is not forthcoming from the government.
- 7 EAPN National Networks are engaged (IE, PL, FI, DE, BE, SR, FR). We need to realise that monitoring is done voluntarily with different countries taking different goals in different years. The issue of extreme poverty is being raised and definitely needs to be included.

Conclusion and next steps

1. Notes, PPTs, links will be sent
2. Webpage will be completed
3. This discussion will feed into further discussions in a few weeks' time.

Any other ideas for webinars, let us know! Survey next week to learn from this experience – thank you for your feedback!