Kenya Citizen Dialogue Report

Theme: “Action for SDGs” Twitter #ACT4SDGs  

Date: 25th September 2017
Venue: YMCA, Nairobi, Kenya

Introduction:

To mark the second anniversary of the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the SDGs Kenya Forum in partnership with National coalition of the Global Call to Action against Poverty (GCAP) organized a dialogue for Civil Society Organizations. The aim was to provide a platform for CSOs to review progress made by the national government in domestication, localization and implementation of the SDGs in the last 2 years in Kenya.

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The key question that participants sought to answer was: “Is Kenya in the right direction or not? A bout 20% responded with a “yes” and argued that it is because of visible improvements in human capital development (e.g. in education) and infrastructure development e.g. improved road network. Participants also felt that the country is in the right direction because it is the first country to have made copies of SDGs roadmap, has clear planning and monitoring framework, Quote: “we are not yet there but we are heading there”. And there is political will since so far, the ministry of devolution and planning has established a specific sector to manage SDGs.

Another 20% felt that Kenya is “not” in the right direction yet because Kenya now is divided into the richest and poorest classes and the gap is even growing wider. Some felt that Kenya is good in policy and law making but not in implementing what is on paper. Some participants sighted the country is getting more ethnically polarized, characterized by strong divisions along tribal lines-quote: “we are not in living and working in unity”. It was also noted that there is still a big challenge with sustainability of commitments made on paper since implementation is still a challenge. For some, there is need to review the historical question: quote-“Who killed Koitalem Arap Samoi? In 1907, a commission of inquiry was set up and who chaired the commission? The killer, the findings were shelved”. The key lesson is that
since 19700 where the first commission of inquiry was set up the documents have continued to gather dust in the shelves. Thus the need to change perceptions and practices of individuals occupying leadership positions in this country, if progress is to be made for achievement of SDGs for all.

60% of participants were “Not sure” if Kenya is moving in the right direction: Quote-“Kenya is in a dilemma, because we have very good plans but not implemented-the pace being taken is not impactful”. Some people felt that as Kenyans there is need to evaluate-the last 2 years of implementation on the basis of conflicts that are still tribal in nature and this scenario does not give us hope. For those passionate about numbers, data is not accessible: the media is not breaking down the information to inform the community of what is happening. Quote-“How many have seen the National Voluntary report to the UN? –only 03 people in the room! Is the problem with the government or with the people?”.

Participants felt that Kenya is not where we were 5 years ago, through devolution the services are to be taken closer to the people, but the same people do not know about SDGs. There are still gaps that need to be addressed e.g some children still don’t go to school, maternal morbidity and mortality is still high.

Some felt that not much has been done on ground, a lot of policy formulation with less implementation. Need to use devolution to fast track the SDGs implementation. On Leave No one behind: The country
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must champion inclusion of every one-if governments do so much work and citizens don’t access the services, information and understand what is going on—they will be left behind. There is need for governments at all levels to have clear work plans, tools and provide platforms for people to participate in decision making, implementation, monitoring and take stalk of the progress against the set targets and indicators.

Participants also highlighted the following as Challenges:

Everyone is excited about SDGs but how can we have big flagship projects and programmes to achieve SDGs.

Currently the common people don’t have knowledge and are not aware, thus limited space to engage planners, ordinary citizens on implementation of SDGS

Common people still face challenges accessing services in government officer at all levels: -people are told the person responsible is not available, people seeking for bursaries are asked for mothers’ voters cards—this is discrimination along the ethnic and tribal lines.

Rural urban migration: -limits participation in county and ward activities because people are either denied access or they feel they don’t belong to the new place of residence.

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Involvement of ordinary people in procurements: the process is very challenging especially for youth and people with disabilities, and corruption is still on the rise.

Some of the SDG terminology is very technical for the ordinary person, - need to make it simple and translated into local languages.

Opportunities:

- To engage with private sector and country Integrated development plans (CIDPs)
- County government Act-provides for funds allocation to public awareness on SDGs
- Government has laid a roadmap on how to sensitize county officials and MCAs on SDGs

Proposals for improvement:

i. Engage in the census process to generate data
ii. SDGs Kenya Forum expected to produce one movie on SDGs- and share in local media platforms
iii. Make the SDGs language simple-the terms are technical-translation into Kiswahili and other languages
iv. Awareness and inclusion-most people are not aware of the content of SDGs
v. CSOs should also align different organizational goals to SDGs-not to detach SDGs from their work
vi. Ownership: the process should be all inclusive-and this can be achieved through devolution
vii. Partnerships, networking, collaboration with government and private sector
viii. Use of Arts and social theater and the media platforms to raise public awareness meaningfully
ix. Need to have specific focus for areas that are vulnerable to climate change (ASAL)
x. Individual ownership-it starts with me? Take action now.
Start with civic education at community level to raise awareness on SDGs using local languages

Need to localize SDGs- through devolution because currently the agenda is still viewed as foreign

SDGs Agenda should be driven by young people –therefore invest more in utilizing their positive energy

Use the governors’ summit to appraise county performance against the national roadmap

Health is a key-prioritize issues of population, access to contraceptives and sexual reproductive health

Address the question of Peace and security: goal 16, without peace, then national resources will be diverted to addressing insecurity.

Taking personal initiatives-e.g reach out to students at universities through the various associations – and each group can pick one goal and work on it

All participating organizations must go back and mainstream SDGs into their programs

Advocacy: CSOS should be willing to be heard-at county level use the CIDPs to make your voice heard

Grab the opportunities, through public participation in annual budgeting, planning, working groups and ward meetings

Organize regular monitoring and accountability forums-like this one to assess performance and feedback

Need to ensure that there is increased budget allocation to civic awareness –the forum should partner with national & county governments for this to happen
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The sub county level involvement of the civil society and citizens: don’t bend low to allegations that so many CSOs come to government offices asking for information? Government is running away from their responsibility with lame excuses. Government officials should organize forums to bring all the actors together, listen to them, offer direction, share out responsibility, work with those who are willing to support.

Work more with the Wards – these are the most convenient platforms for devolving the SDGs.

Focus on documenting SDGs at local level because the different sectors and actors are doing good work without knowing that they are actually implementing SDGs.
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#ACT4SDGs Statement Delivery to Ministry of Devolution and Planning

National Coordinator and The SDGs Unit Director Mr. Isaac Kamande during a courtesy call to deliver Citizen Statement on #ACT4SDGs.

The Director was very impressed to see citizen action towards marking 2 years anniversary of SDGs implementation. He urged the team to actively continue lobbying and advocating for all stakeholders to foster partnerships that focus on citizen lead initiatives, as is the key in achieving Agenda 2030. During the meeting the director committed to engage directly initiatives by CSOs and citizen in SDGs implementation.

The Statement was delivered and circulated to the Cabinet Secretary, Permanent Secretary and officials within the Ministry.