



CoNGO COMMUNICATION No.19 – October 2016

SDGs Development Agenda 2030

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1. PRESIDENTIAL INTRODUCTION

One year has passed since the adoption in September 2015 by the United Nations General Assembly of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), followed in December 2015 by the Paris Agreement on the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). For both of these we owe great appreciation to the UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-Moon, for constantly pushing governments to assume their responsibilities. For the second agreement, the then Executive Secretary of the UNFCCC Secretariat, Cristiana Figueres, also deployed the type of persistent leadership that civil society expects from the top ranks of the UN System. (In this domain, the current UN High Commissioner for Human Rights is another outstanding example.)

The world has now definitively shifted away from viewing climate change as an environmental problem and toward recognizing it as an issue that widely and deeply impacts on human lives, particularly in developing countries. Think only of the increase in natural disasters affecting the most vulnerable, requiring massive humanitarian response and costly infrastructure replacement. Climate change scenarios are intimately intertwined with sustainable development strategies.

Now we are in the first stages of turning the SDGs and the Paris Agreement into reality: this is the hard part! If not exactly up-and-running, they are at least up-and-walking. Governments now have to live up to their commitments, and that requires four elements:

- a. Governmental political courage - i.e. not just political will, since we have too many previous examples of governmental commitments self-sabotaged by political ill-will;
- b. Political decision-making in intergovernmental fora that is focussed on the needs of future generations rather than on gestures oriented toward the short-term of upcoming national élections (this consideration applies with equal force to the long-drawn-out negotiations within the World Trade Organization);
- c. Continued energetic far-sighted leadership from the heads of relevant UN System entities (ECOSOC, UNDP, UNCTAD, ILO, UN Women, FAO, UNESCO, WHO, WMO....);
- d. Unrelenting monitoring and advocacy by civil society organizations, building on the presence, competence and pressure from Civil Society over recent years, without which governments would not have moved so far so fully.

In the current UN General Assembly's plenary debates and avalanche of concomitant events and side-events, there is consistent reference to issues that are in greater or lesser measure related to the SDGs/Agenda 2030. As in the run-up to Rio+20 and during the succeeding three years leading to the adoption of the SDGs/Agenda 2030, Civil Society is a necessary and positive component of the nearly non-stop negotiations/consultations/deliberations/digressions that are so heavily New York-centred. To follow the intergovernmental debates and jousts (some events sponsored by Missions are convened at rather short notice) CSOs need an office - or at least a bedroom! - within short commuting distance from UNHQ !

CSOs have also fully recognized that impacting the implementation of the SDGs/Agenda 2030 requires unprecedented degrees of Civil Society cooperation and indeed (dreaded word) coordination. Previous issues of CoNGO COMMUNICATION have reported on several of these cooperation initiatives, and two further apposite information items (Nos 11 and 12) are in

the present issue. CoNGO COMMUNICATION and related information dispatches have now a recognized role in helping CoNGO's world-wide NGO/CSO constituencies to better follow the New York "hothouse" of meetings, and indeed to know when a presence or input is particularly timely. If we can count on the regular flow of membership fees and goodwill supplementary contributions, we shall continue to provide this service.

Cyril Ritchie, President of CoNGO

The present CoNGO COMMUNICATION has been put together by Yujin Jo, our current Intern from Kyung Hee University, Seoul, continuing the traditions of competence and insightfulness established by her numerous Kyung Hee predecessors. VERY much appreciated. CR

2. GLOBAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT REPORT 2016

Understanding of the scientific basis for action will be needed to achieve the ambitious and transformative goals of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, according to the United Nations Global Sustainable Development Report, issued in July 2016.

Read more: <https://www.un.org/development/desa/publications/global-sustainable-development-report-2016.html>

3. UN HIGH LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT 2016 (HLPF)

The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2016 is the UN Secretary-General's inaugural report on the SDGs and was launched on 19 July 2016 during the Ministerial Segment of the High-level Political Forum. It presents data and analysis on the SDGs for a wide audience with charts, infographics and analysis on selected indicators for which data are already available. [1]

Understanding the scientific basis for action will be needed to achieve the ambitious and transformative goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, according to a new report issued by the United Nations during the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. [2]

Links:

[1] <https://www.un.org/development/desa/undesavoice/more-from-undesesa/2016/08/#27589>

[2] <https://www.un.org/development/desa/undesavoice/more-from-undesesa/2016/08/#27649>

4. SUSTAINABLE ENERGY FOR ALL (SE4All)

SE4All is a network based on the United Nations System, and in the context of Sustainable Development Goal 7 (ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all), SE4All has three objectives to reach by 2030:

- Ensure universal access to modern energy services.
- Double the global rate of improvement in energy efficiency
- Double the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix

Since January 2016 the Chief Executive Officer of SE4All is Rachel Kyte, who is also Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Sustainable Energy for All. Until December 2015, she served as World Bank Group Vice President and Special Envoy for Climate Change, leading the Bank Group's efforts to campaign for an ambitious agreement at the 21st Convention of the Parties of the UNFCCC (COP 21). She was previously World Bank Vice President for Sustainable Development.

The SE4All Knowledge Hub has published "BEYOND CONNECTIONS: ENERGY ACCESS REDEFINED". This report conceptualises a new multi-tier framework for defining and measuring access to energy. Binary metrics such as whether a household has an electricity connection, and whether a household cooks with non-solid fuels, do not help us understand the phenomenon of expanding energy access and how it impacts on socioeconomic development. This report heralds a new definition and metric for energy access that is broader in that it covers energy for households, productive engagements and community facilities, and focuses on the quality of energy being accessed.

5. UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT ASSEMBLY (UNEA)

UNEA 2 was held in Nairobi in May 2016. It was the occasion for the farewell statement by Achim Steiner, who has been an outstanding Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) for the past ten years. Some highlights from his statement are reproduced below.

“We live on a planet of over seven billion people and almost 200 countries of enormously varied cultures, traditions and geographies. A better world for all does not arrive overnight and it can only arrive by agreement, not division. We now have that agreement.

This great agreement, this great realization, which the world came to over the last 40 years, underpins the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. This agreement is that the environment is at the heart of everything. Poverty, hunger, disease, inequity- the world has come to understand their deep and indivisible relationship with an ailing environment.

The converse is naturally also true. Economies and societies are healthier when the environment is healthier. We have greater understanding of this fact than ever before.

This ‘declaration of interdependence’ cannot be underestimated in both its exceptionalism in human history and its importance to our collective future.”

“**T**he tide of opinion has turned in favour of stewarding , rather than liquidating natural assets, focusing on what the majority need rather than what a privileged few want; in other words, when it comes to promoting sustainability, it is time to lean forward, not back.

While the obstacles that lie ahead of us are daunting and there is more to be done, everything that has been achieved in the last 40 years should give us confidence in our ability to deliver. All too often when we look decades ahead it is with a sense of foreboding.

By 2050, we say, sea levels will have risen by so many centimetres, the climate will have warmed by so many degrees and so many species will have disappeared from the planet. Such predictions are important to remind us of the choices we are called upon to make today and it is our duty to heed them.”

“**W**hen over a million people have been killed by natural disasters in the last 15 years and 2.7 billion affected by them, to deny our responsibility for the problem or delay the response is irresponsible. We do not have the luxury of waiting for the science or the policies to be perfect, so we must use the underlying patterns of failure to identify solutions that are rapid and robust enough to manage risks and secure progress for our priorities, rather than watching the situation deteriorate while we search for perfection.

The risk of waiting for a perfect but unattainable solution, speaks for itself. Since 1980, global warming in the arctic has increased at twice the global average. In the last seven years, sudden-onset disasters have displaced one person every second. And in just one year, as we were sadly reminded by the recent mudslides in Sri Lanka and Cyclone Roanu in India, more than 12.6 million people die from living or working in an unhealthy environment, which is perhaps not surprising when you consider that more than 60 percent of our ecosystem and their services are already degraded or exploited unsustainably.”

“**H**uman activity now has such an impact on the atmosphere, geology and ecosystems of the planet that, assuming there are actually still people on this planet millions of years from now, they will see very clear traces of our existence in the rocks and ice. Living in this ‘Ages of the Anthropocene’ is complex and it is going to get a lot more complex, much faster. This means that our institutional architecture, tools and processes are becoming liabilities and it means that as climate change really starts to bite, too many member states, communities and sectors of our economies will be too busy firefighting to tackle the root cause of the crises.

In recognizing the environment as a red thread that ties together the sustainable development goals, the 2030 Agenda is already a significant move towards a more rights based approach to environmental management: the right to clean air and water, to safe food and habitats, to the equitable sharing of a natural heritage that is protected beyond one generation.”

6. UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME (UNEP) Outgoing UNEP Executive Director

Achim Steiner has recently completed an outstanding ten-year term as Executive Director of UNEP.

From September 1, 2016 he is Director of the Oxford Martin School, an institute of the University of Oxford, UK. It's academic and research mandate is "working to address the most pressing global challenges and opportunities of the 21st century".

Contact: achim.steiner@oxfordmartin.ox.ac.uk

7. UNITED NATIONS FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE (UNFCCC)

The new Executive Secretary of the UNFCCC, successor to Christiana Figueres, is Patricia Espinosa, Mexican Secretary of Foreign Affairs from 2006 to 2012. Espinosa was President of the UNFCCC COP 16 in Cancun in 2010.

8. INTERNATIONAL UNION FOR CONSERVATION OF NATURE AND NATURE RESOURCES (IUCN), WORLD CONSERVATION CONGRESS, September, 2016

The theme of the Congress "Planet at the Crossroads" focused on the recently agreed collective challenge of attaining the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) during the next 15 years, without depleting the planet's natural assets beyond its capacity to recover.

More than 10,000 participants were in attendance. The Congress comprised the World Conservation Forum, which convened to take stock of biodiversity conservation; and the IUCN Members Assembly, which addressed governance, policy and programmatic issues of the IUCN.

At the conclusion of the Congress, IUCN members approved 106 resolutions and recommendations dealing with globally transformative and innovative conservation initiatives to meet critical current challenges and opportunities, including the imperative to scale up action on biodiversity and the SDGs. Zhang Xinsheng was re-elected as President of IUCN.

IUCN's contributions to conservation are extensive, including assistance in the development of national environmental legislation and international environmental conventions such as the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, the UNESCO World Heritage Convention, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES), the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), the World Charter for Nature, and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

The following is a list of main topics dealt with by the Congress:

- A Changing Climate: Championing Nature-Based Solutions
- Nature Protects Us: Managing Ecosystems for Disaster Risk Reduction
- Nature-Based Solutions for Sustainable Development
- Indigenous Peoples' Cultural Connections to Forests: How Indigenous Values and Health Indicators are Helping Manage Invasive Species
- Forests: Today and Tomorrow
- World Heritage Sites for Biodiversity Conservation and Eco-Disaster Risk Reduction
- Securing Global Action on Peatlands
- Islands at Risk: Meeting the Global Challenge of Invasive Alien Species
- Elephant Conservation Initiatives
- Launch of the Key Biodiversity Areas (KBA) Standards and Programme
- Western Gray Whale Advisory Panel (WGWAP)
- Everybody's Business: Ending Wildlife Trafficking
- The Challenges and Successes of Marine Species Conservation
- Invasive Species
- The IUCN Green List: Raising the Standard for New Generation of Protected and Conserved Areas
- Launch of the Protected Planet Report 2016
- Red List of Ecosystems (RLE)
- Heritage Heroes Awards
- The High Seas: Conserving the Earth's Final Frontier
- Marine Seismic Surveys: Management Guidelines
- Actions for a Sustainable Ocean
- Ocean Warming Report
- Incorporating Climate Adaptation into Agency-Level Planning in the Pacific Islands Region
- Climate Change Best Practice Guidelines
- Gender and Climate Change
- Private Finance for Public Good
- Managing Conflicts Between Businesses and Civil Society Over the Use of Natural Resources
- Africa Transforming: How Will Chinese Investments Transform Africa's Development?
- The Role of Business in Developing Resilient, Green and Inclusive Agricultural Growth

Corridors in Africa

- Natural Capital Approaches: Identifying Common Ground and Fracture Points
- Biodiversity Offsets: What are They and What Do They Mean to Different Stakeholders?
- Conservation Finance: Lessons from the Field
- Conservation 2.0: Empowering Next Generations
- The SDGs Journey: Achieving the Conservation Imperative for Sustainable Development
- The Role of Nature Conservation in Achieving the SDGs
- Global Commons: Solutions for a Crowded Planet
- Leave No One Behind: Conservation, Rights and Sustainable Development
- Gender-Responsive Financing for the Global Environment
- Water and Health and Security

For information: <http://www.iisd.ca/iucn/congress/2016/>

9. UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON HOUSING AND SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT (HABITAT III), Quito, Ecuador, October 17-20, 2016

This most important UN Summit has before it for adoption a 175-point NEW URBAN AGENDA, which begins by noting that by 2050 the world urban population is expected to nearly double, making urbanization one of the 21st Century's most transformative trends. This growth and concentration pose massive sustainability challenges in terms of housing, infrastructure, basic services, food security, health, education, decent jobs, safety and natural resources, among others.

By readdressing the way cities and human settlements are planned, designed, financed, developed, governed and managed, the NEW URBAN AGENDA will move towards actions ending poverty and hunger, reducing inequalities, promoting inclusive and sustainable economic growth, achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, and protecting the environment. The NEW URBAN AGENDA will contribute to the implementation and localization of the 2030 Agenda in an integrated manner, and to the achievement of the SDGs.

References in the NEW URBAN AGENDA to NGOs and Civil Society include the following:

15.b: "The New Urban Agenda will recognize the leading role of national governments, as appropriate, in the definition and implementation of inclusive and effective urban policies and legislation for sustainable urban development, and the equally important contributions of sub-national and local governments, as well as civil society and other relevant stakeholders, in a transparent and accountable manner."

48: "We encourage effective participation and collaboration among all relevant stakeholders, including local governments, the private sector, civil society, women and youth organizations, as well as those representing persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, professionals, academic institutions, trade unions, employers organizations, migrant associations, and cultural associations, in ascertaining the opportunities for urban economic development as well as in identifying and addressing existing and emerging challenges."

82: "We invite international and regional organizations and bodies including those of the United Nations System and multilateral environmental agreements, development partners, international and multilateral financial institutions, regional development banks, the private sector, and other stakeholders, to enhance coordination of their urban and rural development strategies and programmes to apply an integrated approach to sustainable urbanization, maintaining the implementation of the New Urban Agenda."

92: "We will promote participatory age-and gender-responsive approaches at all stages of the urban and territorial policy and planning processes, from conceptualization to design, budgeting, implementation, evaluation, and review, rooted in new forms of direct partnership between governments at all levels and civil society, including through broad-based and well-resourced permanent mechanisms and platforms for cooperation and consultation open to all, using information and communication technologies and accessible data solutions."

126: "We recognize that the implementation of the New Urban Agenda requires an enabling environment and a wide range of means of implementation...as well as enhanced international cooperation and partnerships among governments at all levels, the private sector, civil society, the United Nations System, and other actors, based on the principles of equality, non-discrimination, accountability, respect for human rights, and solidarity, especially with those who are the poorest and most vulnerable."

148: "We will promote the strengthening of the capacity of national, sub-national and local governments, including local government associations, as appropriate, to work with women and girls, children and youth, older persons and persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and local communities, and those in vulnerable situations as well as with civil society, the academia, and research institutions in shaping organizational and institutional governance processes, enabling them to effectively participate in urban and territorial development decision-making."

And in the final Chapter on Follow-up and Review:

162; "We encourage voluntary, country-led, open, inclusive, multi-level, participatory and transparent follow-up and review of the New Urban Agenda. It should take into account contributions of national sub-national and local levels of government, and be supplemented by contributions from the United Nations System, regional and sub-regional organizations, major groups and relevant stakeholders, and should be a continuous process aimed at creating and reinforcing partnerships among all relevant stakeholders and fostering exchanges of urban solutions and mutual learning."

Finally HABITAT III will ask the UN General Assembly to consider holding HABITAT IV in 2036 "within a renewed political commitment to assess and consolidate progress on the New Urban Agenda".

10. INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT (IFAD), IFAD'S Rural Development Report 2016

"Fostering inclusive rural transformation" is the title of IFAD's flagship publication bringing together leading thinkers to analyse lessons learnt from experiences across the globe, and to look at rural development in a new way. The Report demonstrates that the SDGs cannot be achieved without developing rural areas and investing in smallholder farmers who are key to food security.

IFAD's Rural Development Report 2016 looks at how to bring rural people into the economic mainstream and how to transform rural areas so that development is not only inclusive but also socially, economically and environmentally sustainable. The Report examines 62 countries and looks at their development in the context of rural transformation, as well as the structural transformation of the wider economy. The Report also demonstrates the interconnectedness between rural and urban development.

IFAD is a specialized agency of the United Nations dedicated to eradicating poverty and hunger in rural areas of developing countries.

Download the full report: <http://www.ifad.org/ruraldevelopmentreport>

Browse the report online: <http://ifad.us12.list-manage.com/track/click?u=e2b764c5d0e9a72da24d69265&id=35fd65534d&e=a46cf13924>

11. UN DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS (DESA) NGO MAJOR GROUP ORGANIZING PARTNERS FOR 2016-2019

The arrangement instituting Major Groups (Women, Children and Youth, Labour Unions, Business & Industry, NGOs, Local Authorities, Science and Technology, Indigenous Peoples, Farmers) adopted at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development at Rio in 1992 still functions in ever-widening circles. The Major Groups mechanism was adopted by UNEP, and functioned in regard to the MDGs and to Rio+20 in 2012, and in the formative processes of the SDGs. This role is being strengthened in regard to advocating for and monitoring implementation of Agenda 2030.

The NGO Major Group has appointed "Organizing Partners" for the period 2016-2019 as facilitators and managers of the process. The Organizing Partners are from Baha'i International, Soroptimist International, Philippines Rural Reconstruction Movement, Caribbean Policy Development Centre, European Environmental Bureau, and CoNGO (through the CoNGO Office in New York). Jeffery Huffines of CIVICUS who has spearheaded the NGO Major Group information and collaboration mechanism for several years will serve 2016-2017 as Senior Advisor.

12. CIVIL SOCIETY

RELAUNCH OF THE GLOBAL CALL TO ACTION AGAINST POVERTY (GCAP)

GCAP started its journey in 2005 gathering together a large number of civil society organizations and social movements to fight poverty in the world and monitor the achievement of MDGs. With the adoption of the SDGs, GCAP is making a fresh start. The new Co-Chairs of GCAP, Beckie Malay, Salina Sanou and Riccardo Moro, have issued a message of which key points are reproduced here.

Human history shows how social commitment has been able to reach many fundamental steps across generations. Political actions taken by a large number of actors provided monumental victories against fundamental injustices such as slavery and apartheid. But still a strong engagement is needed to build a world of justice, democracy and peace.

GCAP played an important role in this action during the last decade. As a broad network of grassroots organizations all over the world, GCAP has a unique history of mobilizing millions of people to Stand Up and Take Action against poverty. GCAP reached out to world leaders, governments, and the general public to take notice of the magnitude of poverty, expose the structures that allowed it to pervade, and find the ways for effectively eradicating it.

Ten years after, we face an even more daunting and challenging world. The need to build "the world we want" is urgent. This means that GCAP's original call of Fighting Poverty, Promoting Equality must be translated to working for justice. It means fighting inequality by addressing economic and fiscal justice, tackling social and gender exclusion, demanding climate justice and seeking the just resolution of political conflicts.

Agenda 2030 and the SDGs, with other relevant spaces, are significant opportunities to develop this commitment. But institutional spaces for participation and technical tools are not enough. We will be successful only by working together. We need to share talents, energy and passion. As co-Chairs of the new GCAP we may not always have the answers or solutions to all the problems but we promise to work tirelessly together to ensure that "no one is left behind". We seek to bring about transformational change among the citizens that we work with and we rely on the support of all to ensure that this happens and that the planet will be a healthy and peaceful place for all to live in.

Beckie Malay Salina Sanou Riccardo Moro

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13. CALENDAR

NOTICE

1. The CoNGO Calendar is a service to the NGO constituency to enable each individual organization to determine, in good time, its possible or desired involvement in the events mentioned, in accordance with the organization's own statutory or programmatic focus.
2. The conferences and meetings listed in the CoNGO Calendar are not under the convening or invitational or access responsibility of CoNGO. They are listed for the information of readers, and any queries about any event should be addressed solely to the organizer of the event, not to CoNGO.

Cyril Ritchie, President of CoNGO

2016

2016-2025: United Nations “Decade for Action on Nutrition”

October 3-14: Second Global Academy on the Green Economy, organized by UNEP, ILO, UNIDO, UNITAR, UNDP. (ILO Training Centre, Turin)

<http://www.un-page.org/events72016-green-economy-academy>

October 16-17: 2016 6th Global Forum on Health Promotion
(CHARLOTTETOWN, Prince Edward Island, CANADA)

info@thequaich.pe.ca

NB: The Global Forum on Health Promotion is an initiative of Geneva’s Alliance for Health Promotion, an NGO in official relations with the World Health Organization. Five previous Global Forums have been held in Geneva since 2011. This year marks the first time the event has been held outside of Europe, and the occasion coincides with the 30th anniversary of the Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion. The 6th Global Forum on Health Promotion is hosted and co-organized by the Government of Prince Edward Island in partnership with the Alliance for Health Promotion, The Quaich Inc. (Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island) and Groupe entreprises en santé (Montreal, Québec).

Central to the 6th Global Forum’s programming are the five principles of the Ottawa Charter [1], which celebrates its 30th anniversary this year, and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. The 6th Global Forum will focus on how health promotion activities can support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals over the next 14 years, revealing how communities and organizations around the world are creating change for local, national and global impact.

The Quaich

25 Bolger Drive, Charlottetown, PE, Canada
Charlottetown, PE C1A 7T2
Canada

Links:

[1] <http://thequaich.us7.list-manage.com/track/click?u=929184ffe039985425f66cbb7&id=f79a826e94&e=c10cc32816>

October 17-20: UN Commission on Human Settlements: HABITAT III (Quito, Ecuador)

<http://unhabitat.org/habitat-iii/>

November 13-16: International Association of Universities (IAU), 15th General Conference: “Higher Education: A catalyst for innovative and sustainable societies” (Bangkok, Thailand)

<https://www.eiseverywhere.com/ehome/index.php?eventid=142986&>

2017

March 6-7: PARTNERSHIP FOR ACTION ON GREEN ECONOMY (PAGE), organized by UNEP, ILO, UNDP, UNIDO, UNITAR: 2nd PAGE Ministerial Conference (Berlin)

page@unep.org

May 22-26: UNISDR Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (Cancun, Mexico)

<http://www.unisdr.org/conferences/2017/globalplatform>

2018

Seventieth Anniversary of CoNGO !

February/March: CoNGO 26th General Assembly

(Precise dates and location to be determined)

UN-HABITAT: 9th World Urban Forum (WUF9) (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia)

<http://unhabitat.org/kuala-lumpur-to-host-world-urban-forum-in-2018/>

2019

Centenary of the International Labour Organization