

Towards sustainable, resilient and inclusive societies through participation of all:
What implications for the implementation of Agenda 2030?

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Concept note

In order for the vision of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to be turned into reality, sustainable development needs to have ownership of people and diverse groups across society. No matter how cleverly defined public policies may be by experts in government or academic institutions, and no matter how evidence-based they are, strategies for the SDG-era must be underpinned by support of individuals, communities and civil society actors who have had at their disposal sufficient and understandable information. Such dynamics apply, for example, in a village community where an investor seeks to build a large manufacturing facility; in a coastal area where a central government plans measures against extreme weather events; or in a megacity with an ethnic minority concentrated in a poor neighborhood.

In other words, policies need to be underpinned by participative deliberation of citizens. After all, the text of the 2030 Agenda states in its preamble that *“We are determined to mobilize the means required to implement this Agenda through a revitalized Global Partnership for Sustainable Development, based on a spirit of strengthened global solidarity, focused in particular on the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable and with the participation of all countries, all stakeholders and all people.”*

The SDGs contain participation within several Goals, as part of the notion of inclusive societies, most markedly in target 16.7 *“Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels.”* Further, it is also explicit in target 5.5 on women’s effective participation at all levels of decision-making and in target 6.b on the voice of local communities in water and sanitation management.

The Czech Republic, in its capacity as a candidate for ECOSOC Presidency in the 2017-2018 cycle, in collaboration with countries from various regional groups, civil society and business partners, wishes to explore the potential of the idea of participation by all – its benefits as well as obstacles preventing us from tapping this potential.

The aim of this panel discussion is to enhance conversations on the participation principle within the 2030 Agenda, its implementation, and follow-up and review mechanisms, in the context of the ECOSOC. Speakers on our panel will address the issue from several viewpoints: North as well as South, national government as well as local government levels. We encourage comments from member states and stakeholders, which will help us guide this effort in a meaningful direction.