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**SDG Stakeholder approach**

**Introduction**

Good morning, Jan-Gustav! Good to see you! Good morning everybody! Today is another lecture of the introductory lectures for youth engagement on 2030 development agenda and Sustainable Development Goals.

**Speaker**

Today's speaker Mr. Jan-Gustav Strandenaes, he is a Senior Advisor on Governance of the Stakeholder Forum and myself, Lichia Yiu will be a company the person the speaker through this process today.

Let me say a few words about Jan Gustav since he is a very important figure in terms of the Civil Society movement or especially on environmental and governance issues since 1970s and today of course. He continues to play a key role in terms of ensuring good governance and implementation of SDGs in the UN system, he has worked with the UN commission for Sustainable Development for 15 years as NGO liaison office at the UN headquarter. And he also was a diplomat for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway and he was stationed in different embassies in Botswana, Uganda and for 15 years director of an aid environmental NGO with projects in Africa, Asia and Latin America. So he has brought with him a really wide and in-depth experiences concerning the engagement of stakeholders in the policy dialogue and also in the policy implementation and today we are talking about the 2030 Agenda.

Let me say a few words about the organization today that is Adolf, he was also so a co-founder it's called Stakeholder Forum. It is a non-profit International Organization working to advise extend to, to advance sustainable development the environment and good governance at all administrative levels. And the aim of Stakeholder Forum is to enhance open, accountable and participatory decision-making on issues related to the UN system, in general and to sustainable development and environment in particular. So I will fix this few words I'd like to welcome Jan-Gustav to start with his lecture. The topic of today it is about stakeholder approach and Partnerships for SDG implementation.

**Q1**

As we know the policy is well laid out and with clear those targets and also the indicators. So let me start by asking the question, **who are the stakeholders in the context of this 2030 agenda?** And **why it is important to bring them in to the now to the process especially the role of non-state actors?** So Jan-Gustav for is yours

**In 2019 at the Sustainable Development Summit, …**

Well thank you very much, Lichia thank you. The question is important and I think it's not well understood in its concise context, I mean let's just look at two things. First one is that the fact, back in 2019 at the Summit on Sustainable Development, the member states of the UN decided to call this decade that we're in, a decade for action to fulfill the 2030 Agenda. And I will be speaking and using definitely 2030 Agenda and SDGs as interrelated because the SDGs are part of the 2030 Agenda and I keep saying to all people you need to read the document that explains the 2030 Agenda.

So this is a decade of action and implementation and as I've written here next to Guterres the Secretary General of the UN, implementing the 2013 agenda is about integrating all SDGs in all plans at all levels. This is what the technicalities called this the decision making at the subsidiarity level.

So this is extremely important this integration, all implementation must also be based on principles of universality being planet and human sensitive, create transformative change and Partnerships within Civil Society, the authorities and the private sector.

And involving Civil Society and non-state actors we'll come back to the difference here we'll provide contact with the Grassroots and that's why they're so important because authorities do not always have this hands-on feeling with the Grassroots and the participation of people at large. Because it's when you are in contact with the Grassroots and you could also identify emerging issues which is extremely important here.

And emerging issues can unset the Agenda and bring legitimacy and key levels of governance to decision-making processes that's why it is important to have the non-state actors as part of this.

**Is there a typology for civil society? -between market, state and society**

And there is of course today a knowledge-based understanding and a practical understanding of Civil Society and I think we need to understand that Civil Society is a specific group of organizations. And as I say STATE here it's between the market the state and society apologize for this misprint here, it's the statement of the state. You find in the Civil Society non-state stakeholders you find volunteerism, charity, sports, music, all interests that are called neoliberal interests.

They're activists, they're advocacy organizations they are professional NGOs that exist somewhere between advocacy work and thinktanks, it's very much a case of a modernism. And I think they would challenge the fundamental in politics and religion although you find NGOs and Civil Society even there.

And I would also very much emphasize the humanistic basis of most of the Civil Society organizations with a very strong focus on rights-based approaches. I've just made a few sort of joking abbreviations here the NGO, in the middle stands for the non-governmental organization, a GONGO which is often used is a government NGO and they're not really Civil Society. Then we have the phenomenon of the NGI where you have one person dealing with this for some reason and the NGI stands for the non-governmental individual and related to that are the MONGOs (my own NGO organizations) that are not really that democratic and participatory.

And that's why I've said with red letters here qualify the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the UN's resolution 1996/31 which you can find easily through Google that is where you have the correct definition of a non-governmental organization that pertains to the U.N. And I advise you all to look at that it's an interesting document.

**What are NGOs－non state stakeholders**

Now Civil Society rests on humanistic values and I think historically it was rediscovered during the Renaissance and the enlightenment period so we go back a couple of hundred years to see modern organizations they emerge. And the first ones were the anti-slavery organizations, the organized part today of Civil Society is a product of modernity and I would also emphasize strongly that they are an integrated part of the social contract that we see around us. If you don't have them you do not have a viable and an active democracy. And it exists within ideas from modernity has a civil ethos, moral values and integrity and I think this also sets it very strongly apart from the private sector and from authorities. Not to say that there are no morals in authorities but in Civil Society you find a very strong advocacy element that will promote the moral values and the integrity. Implicitly it's expected that Civil Society will advance good and sound values such as Justice equality, Equity rights-based approaches, value-based social policy in short fighting for the well-being of humanity as Professor Frederic Powell at Cork University in Ireland says.

**Article 71 from the UN Charter－Agenda 21**

And this is important also because when the United Nations was founded back in 1945. Into the charter of the UN you see article 71 and this is where the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are given a formal and legal position in the international system so the NGO as such is a legal entity has formal recognitions but a stakeholder which is often used in referencing Civil Society is not an accurate term. Stakeholder is a person or an organization with a stake in something, the concept stakeholder is context dependent and it can be a government, it can be a Civil Society, it can be almost anything so emphasis is on this fact that stakeholders as such have no legal and formal position within the UN system or any other intergovernmental process.

Civil Society this concept suffers from the same but and this is important, all Civil Society organizations are NGOs at the UN but not all NGOs are Civil Society. Enter the group, enter the concept major groups which we got through Agenda 21 which was adopted back in 1992 at the first three year conference. And to make the issue of the NGO a bit more explicit and perhaps easier to understand what was done was they grouped different constituency into the nine major groups.

And the nine major group concept which now is very much viable at the SDG communities and UN's environment act is the following Women is one, Children the news, the next one Farmers, the NGO Community, Indigenous Peoples, Trade Unions, Local Authorities, Science/Technology and Business/Industry.

And when you see this and you look at what I said at all Civil Society organizations are NGOs but not all NGOs are civil society, you will understand this from looking at the major group concept.

So that's it there's lots more to be said about this but the brevity of this presentation will not allow us to do that, so the next question will be this one.

**Q2**

yeah you know I'm impressed in terms of uh you know the depths of the concept of NGOs and those stakeholder groups in the sense that it does sort of represent evolution of thought and values. But I was just wondering in today's context **how much progress are we making in the stakeholder participation in the in the global politics?**

**Stakeholder Positions in the 2030 Agenda**

This is a big question to answer and I can only sort of skim the surface of this and to try to answer this, I would actually point to the challenges and I've done this into four areas to the left, I have two here influence and interest. And then we have the impact and the implementation level is on local, national, regional and global level and the three major stakeholders and use that phrase now are the governments, the business and Civil Society and NGOs.

And of course their inference if you look at them at the local level is very high, if you look at this at the national level, government and business influences is high but Civil Society and NGOs are lessening.

You go to regional level and a good example of a region is of course the EU, the Civil Society influence becomes less and when you go Global it's quite low and that's why we need the U.N as a platform in which to work we'll come back to that a little bit later.

When it comes to interest and I looked at the interest how this is developed over time and I have some interesting and surprising understanding of what this.

Again you have the same stakeholders the government, the business and the Civil Societies. And at a local level it's quite high then business is not so interested in local level SDGs but Civil Society great variations if you look at the differences in the countries.

The best indication here is to look at the Voluntary National Reviews which are produced by the conference which is beginning right now as we speak.

At the national level, well, this is changing so governments are beginning to have more interest in the SDGs, business have already seen market opportunities, Civil Societies are lagging behind.

You go to regional level, I would say business interest is growing but then you have a very inconsistent performance by governments.

Again an exception is the EU and I think that's also because of a very active Civil Society if you look at the progress of Civil Society you get the regional and global level is lessening unfortunately.

Now the ability to implement this is where it becomes crucial in order to answer your question. When you look at government and business across all these four levels, their ability to implement is very high. You come to Civil society and NGOs it is waning as you get to the global level, their ability to implement there are some good examples exceptions I'll point to that level.

Preparedness now that's an interesting question to ask. How prepared are these government to go into the local level? I would say government not really there yet. You come to the regional level there is a difference here but it's inconsistent, globally not really, at every International Conference their express strong interest and being prepared but it's not really there because the money is not coming. And it's not as good with business or Civil Society.

But the business opportunities on the national and regional level is changing because they see the need to be aware of the market saying we want sustainable business, so their interest is growing doesn't necessarily mean that they are understanding how or implement employing all the SDGs.

**Progress－conceptual or practical?**

Now the last one is interesting because the preparedness the interest the implementation level is reflected in what I would call national strategies.

And to the left I have written that Sustainable Development has by 2019 finally reached political legitimacy, this is interesting. Because it's not been understood by government that this is part of the policy but how does that look like in reality?

Well as I say in the big box here there is a tendency to develop strategies along traditional development thinking which leads to one or two things.

One, efforts in National strategies are made to adapt development thinking to Sustainable Development but then they just kick the boxes, take the boxes for sustainability categories or there many countries that are developing two strategies one is based on traditional development thinking one on sustainability and in both cases as the world Public Services Report from the U.N States.

In both cases Sustainable Development including their studies is given a lower priority. So when we say that success is not where we want it to be right now, it's because of this and this needs to change

**Q3**

Well that sounds very disturbing and I also looking at the reflecting on your Matrix the person of different positions. I somehow struck me that **Partnerships also need to happen between NGOs. So it's not just about the state and business and NGOs reaching Partnerships for NGO almost vital. So how does this work?**

**Governance challenges in the context of implementation**

Well the works on many many levels and unfortunately we can't go into the depths of all of them but this is important. I mean it's a truism and we think about it and we say it but we need to take it in, there are a couple of issues that we need to keep in mind. Unless governments as I write to the left, unless governments own intergovernmental processes and they are being beginning to own SDGs and 2030 Agenda policies will never be taken seriously this goes across every country in the world.

But then this is interesting, unless people feel ownership with their development with for instance SDGs, nothing will be implemented.

People are very good at undermining government, their government policy. Have you seen that across the board throughout history so the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs will have to be implemented at all levels local, national, regional and global in Partnerships. And this is where Civil Society can play a very important role in propagating the SDGs that's hugely important that's one issue where they haven't perhaps been so active and they should be more active.

**Implementing SDGs: key elements, good governance…**

And there are other things that implementing SDGs key elements must be considered in developing Partnerships and the issue of good governance must be inserted everywhere.

And we find the following elements they're all taken out of the 2030 Agenda document and I'm certainly not going to poke, go into every one of this because there are too many. But this is a summary that people can look at and discuss afterwards.

I mean all over all overall we have a learning culture in that approach to Partnerships then it needs to be parallel with the right there which are governance issues.

All of these elements can be combined in good implementation levels promoting integrated approaches, business as good as doing that.

But then you go to the right and you look at accountability, transparency, due diligence and Civil Society can ask business in their approaches－do you do this all the time? Process management including conflict mediation, well is that quality participation etc. I mean this kind of list of important elements needs to be discussed when we develop Partnerships and some of them some of the Partnerships are quite good at this.

**How can non-state stakeholders respond…?**

So the another question how non-states they're going to respond constructively and with relevance this is important.

So the challenges posed by the complexity of the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda and be actively involved. If all and this is a bit provocative all Civil Society care about is being the watchdog? To what level is expert knowledge needed? And I think it is needed because if you look at the 17 SDGs the 169 targets you need to understand the basics of this.

So I think Civil Society and NGOs in Partnerships are faced with their Revolution they are not fully embraced, they need to understand the complex of it. If not business will take over they got the expertise, they have the money, they have the blessing from authorities and then they will go ahead without integrating Civil Society.

That's why we need to really work hard and in smart with developing the implementation in Partnerships because Civil Society brings with this the value basis of the2030 agenda and I think they're good at that.

**SDG technicalities**

And these are the technicalities of the of the SDGs, 17 SDGs, 169 targets, 232 indicators and they're integrated, interlinked, indivisible. People-centered, Planet sensitive, universal etc.

And this is actually an area where Civil Society can be actively challenging business and authorities to remember these things.

**A question of scale－a serious and often ignored governance question**

I have I'd like this philosopher he died a few years ago, he's a Finnish philosopher his name is Georg Henrik Von Wright.

He's written a very good issues on progress and how we tend to say “progress is all we need well what kind of it” he asks and to the left I've asked a number of questions again which can be discussed above and beyond our presentation here.

But he starts by scaling up everything and it becomes too large and details are lost, complexity is lost, getting decisions right is difficult, standardization can be difficult, and problematic mainstreaming everything, you'd actually say this is part of everything and there are no responsibility here.

And we say now mainstreaming must not be away streaming.

Implementation and collaboration and governance can suffer and this goes directly to the five piece of the SDGs, people, planet, partnership, peace and prosperity (5Ps) and the leave no one behind issue and this is also something that Civil Society must be aware of.

**Governance, relevance and effective partnerships－do we really understand the challenges?**

And this is again how governments governance is integrated into this and I'm just leave these with questions for the audience to discuss later.

But to the right, I am asking a few key questions, we have 230 indicators are they relevant? Who decided? Did the people be part of this? Was Civil Society able to constructively go into this? So that's why all these questions are important to be raised and I leave this with you and with the audience to discuss later, we don't have to go through it here but important points need to be asked and unset by each partnership and then we can go to other issues.

**Q4**

I'm sort of struck by the fact that you put out that very critical questions, are these indicators are relevant and in what context are they relevant. And I think this is critical in order to make SDGs so the implementation effective and brings real sort of benefits to the people especially for the vulnerable groups.

and the indicators are going to be up for reviews in a couple of years and this is where Civil Society is not really actively involved because they say this is not for us, this is not for the expert.

This is where Civil Society and NGOs need to be involved and say we don't really think that these indicators are good enough, we add ones and there is a beginning interest in that area.

And I I'm also a firm believer that's saying that with the use of social media that we see, we could see there's a lot more transparency and accountability about what's going on in different societies.

So these forces and the technologies can be put to good use.

So the good use is to say what is happening let's try to bring data and evidence to measure this indicators and as well as to raise the question are they cover more than necessary corners and prospects and perspectives around the five key issues.

So **are there good examples from your experience that CSO or NGO have been involved in the SDGs that actually made somewhat little difference?**

Well yes I know, I mean there is a bit of a problem in getting good examples out because the Civil Society is quite actively involved in the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) the UN body which coordinates the SDGs but they're not always given the flow so they can tell about their in their good examples.

**Why do we participate in Intergovernmental Process?**

But I have a few one, then I also want to put this in the context of why does Civil Society participate because through inference and the Civil Society groups were actively involved in the open working group formulating the SDGs.

We were helping to set the Agendas that in itself is a good example, we got the SDGs the way they were because Civil Society was involved.

We were actively involved in negotiating the outcomes from the process leading up to the 2030 Agenda and by participating we were helping to confer legitimacy and this is why Civil Society must be involved in all the elements.

Without the involvement of Civil Society in NGOs, there is no legitimacy to what the intergovernmental organizations are doing. And then of course the challenge as we are trying to address now is implementing the solutions.

**Negotiating outcomes: Chemicals－Providing Content an Influencing**

Now there are some very very good examples I've listed a few of them to in this big box here, and I say by always being present, the group called which is an international network of chemically oriented and interested organization. We're able actually to help develop the chemical conventions we have today, but this group I've been working on the approach to International chemicals management are able to produce high-level expertise input a kind of an expedition chemical issues that were way beyond the understanding and grasp of knowledge of the delegates negotiating this.

So here you see a good example where an expert group of NGOs come in and tell delegates this is where you want to go. They also helped develop the Minamata convention on mercury, another very good example and if you go to UNOCHA and UNAIDS, UNOCHA to the relief organizations of the UN, you find that the NGOs providing field expertise from helping AIDS people and from helping refugees are listened to because they come with expert experience.

And the same thing as in the Plastics revolutions that was just negotiated now at the UN environment assembly in March this year. I would say that plastic's resolution would not have been what it was and it not been for Civil Society and their expert inputs.

So brilliant examples here how the NGO Community with Civil Society have been able to formulate conventions and resolutions that are highly relevant to the well-being of the world when it comes to environment and Sustainable Development.

And this is why I think the knowledge revolution in Civil Society is very important so there are a number of very good examples on how this can be done with the participation of Civil Society.

**Q5-1**

With the example of the plastics and also the chemical groups there are some issues need to be somehow unpacked a bit. One is how do they organize so that they could actually master such a wide range of knowledge in order to convince the government. Because governments also have their own experts and looking at these issues so we're talking about is sort of really a scientific debate. And the second where the resource come from that they could actually organize and to been gaged because this is one of the common concerns saying that you know NGOs do not have the necessary resources financially and human wise and technically to actually engage in the more technical and in-depth discussion. **Do you agree with this view and if not how can they start to build up some of these competencies?**

No, I totally agree with you and I think the examples of the networks that I gave have been very good at reaching out to people in every country in the world and by using internet. They have become stronger it doesn't cost a lot but you need to be very active, proactively involved in reaching out to these experts its environment. You go to think tanks, you go to NGOs, you go to the presence of academic's, it’s there but people need to read up on this.

So going back to what I said early in this presentation, you need to combine expert knowledge understanding of the intergovernmental processes and look at how this fits into the context of in the 2030 Agenda.

And it's not impossible because the energy and the knowledge and the willingness is always ready within Civil Society.

And there are capacity building issues to see how you interact with the UN system which is not impossible to understand.

What I am always surprised at that so many come to these intergovernmental meetings without having read the background documents, I asked these NGO people “when you went to university did you study and read your background paper?” and they said “yes of course”, then why haven't you done the same in this process.

And I think again the examples I mentioned where you have prepared Civil Society people coming into a negotiation and they know what they're talking about, they're also listened to because they make sense.

**Q5-2**

Well that makes a lot of sense so I think you know just to have the good intention is necessary but not sufficient (yes right). **Where do you think young people you know if they have not been engaged in any of these social issues or social movement can be active and learn and also can help in terms of global community and safeguarding the rights?**

Well, I mean they're two three obvious levels. First of all if a person is interested in Plastics and oceans that's where he or she should go because as you said with a commitment and engagement and interest then you can build your knowledge.

So pick and choose the wide variety of subject matters here and you go to the a SDGs, you have 17 different areas with the 17 SDGs and if you want to be detailed you have 169 different targets you can pick and choose your own interests.

**Rights based approaches, justice, human rights, equity and equality**

**Good governance, access, participation**

**Intergenerational issues**

But I think young people are very good at some issues. First of all if you look at the two low arrows here, this is the main target and main mission of the SDGs and the 23rd Agenda. it's TRANSMOATIVE action and I think young people with commitment are good at rights-based approaches, Justice, Human Rights (HR), Equity, Quality, Good governance, Access, Participation and Intergenerational issues. I think they should bring this with them if you look at what youth have been able to do in the climate issues, they're good at that they're good at pinpointing the issues and the challenges of the CO2 emissions.

But I also do this, they do this with a compassion based on justice and human rights. And I think the human rights element into Sustainable Development and into environment is hugely important and some progress was made last year when the Council of Human Rights decided to we have a right to a clean environment.

Now this needs to be pushed further, an inclusion of Civil Society and all decision-making processes extremely important and the energy of Youth can do that, and the right to self-selection by several societies something that the youth have been very good at and they need to continue doing.

**And if we all do that then put the SDG elements together like this**

if you read the SDGs the 2030 Agenda, you'll find nine areas you need to keep in your head. Integrated, Interlinked, Indivisible are all the 17 SDGs. The Universal, People Centered and Planet sensitive and you have the social economic environmental element of the sustainability dimensions and you put this together and keep all these nine elements in your head you get transformative Sustainable Development.

And this is where young people are good at integrating elements and if they want to choose something pick their own interest area and do it in this context.

So if I understand what you're saying correctly you basically say don't worry about where to go, what is the right door but to pick something that you actually where your heart is and have passion about and then you can actually make difference by talking to other people who are also passionate or other young people who are also passionate about that particular topic.

Absolutely but you need also to provide your passion and you’re your understanding and your feeling of justice and human rights with knowledge, you need to do that. And then you put this together we can implement a better world.

So therefore when we talk about NGOs or Civil Society groups, we are also having the other people like academic researchers Professionals in this particular syllabus formulation that they also can be involved and should be involved in order to bring the necessary knowledge into the discussion.

Absolutely, if we didn't have the IPCC which now today consists of three and a half thousands of the most outstanding researchers and academics in the world we wouldn't have had the understanding of climate change that we have today and we would not have had the compassionate interest by young people in climate issues.

And I hope that the which works on biodiversity will attain the same level of understanding and acceptance this is another area where academics with practitioners where delegates and politicians should come together and make sure that this basis is extremely important.

The combination of signs and facts and implementations and policy and academics in Civil Society with the support of Youth.

We do this we can provide make a better world, I am very optimistic about that and you need to do this in an intergenerational context as well.

**End**

Well that's a perfect place to end in terms of this lecture, we are thinking intergenerationally and also we need to learn and work into generationally. And with that I want to thank you Jan-Gustav for being with us today and to summarize your vast knowledge and experience in a very short while thank you once again.

Thank you so much Lichia have a good day.

You too. Bye