

**ACTIVITIES REPORT**



**FROM LOCAL TO GLOBAL:  
Enabling Environments for  
SDG Policy Change**

NOVEMBER 2017 - OCTOBER 2018

[www.together2030.org](http://www.together2030.org)

**TOGETHER  
2030**



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# Foreword

Accelerating the pace of national Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) implementation was the main call and aspiration during this year. Calling on Governments to accelerate pace, calling on stakeholders to contribute, encouraging, and reminding about Civil Society engagement in national process has been a loud outcry. Three years are gone and now there are 12 left. We no longer have 15 years and the clock continues to tick loud. At stake is the promise of a transformational agenda that has brought hopes to the lives of many.

The Together 2030 initiative, like the SDGs, has also reached three years. During the reporting period of November 2017 to October 2018, we too have accelerated our advocacy actions and calls for an enabling environment for SDG policy change. No policy development, but policy change in line with the transformative aspiration of the 2030 Agenda.

We did not work alone because we established partnership as the one where we joined up in consortium with various CSOs platforms around a review and analysis of the 2017 Voluntary National Reviews report that allowed us to dig deeper into what national implementation is taking place in countries.

We did not work alone because our membership increased and more organisations from across the world want to be part of the exchanges and learnings our initiative offers to Civil Society, including opportunities to engage in global processes and the development of resources that can best serve their national actions for SDGs implementation.

We brought the voices of civil society and non-governmental stakeholders through the perception survey we launched for the third year in a row in a consolidated effort to elevate those voices in the global arena.

From Policy to Action and enabling environments for policy change continues to be central to our national, regional and global efforts.

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# 1. Introduction: about Together 2030



Established in 2015, [Together 2030](#) is a global, action-oriented initiative that aims to generate and share knowledge on the implementation and accountability of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The initiative has already mobilized over 600 members across regions with a strong presence in developing countries and a clear interest from organizations based in developed countries.

Together 2030 is guided by a unifying vision: The commitments of the 2030 Agenda are made a reality, with civil society contributing in a meaningful way. It works to achieve this in the following ways:

- **Enabling and strengthening Civil Society capacity:** Together 2030 aims to contribute to overcoming the huge disparities in capacity within civil society organizations across the world by creating spaces to promote, discuss, reflect and equip civil society to play a meaningful role in the implementation and follow up of the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs at all levels.
- **Supporting action on the SDGs:** Together 2030 focuses on ensuring that civil society organizations and stakeholders are able to share knowledge and experiences of implementation and accountability and track the implementation of the SDGs and the fulfilment of 2030 Agenda commitments.

## Together 2030 in numbers

- As of October 2018, **656 members** are part of the Initiative (see full list [here](#))– an increase of 15% from last year.
- A total of **107 countries represented**.
- The **Africa region** represents 44% of the entire membership, followed by **Europe & North America** with 24%; **Asia & the Pacific** with 22%; **Latin America & the Caribbean** with 17%; and **Global organizations** representing 3%.
- **Developing countries** represent 72% of the membership
- International organizations and organizations based in **developed countries** represent 28% of Together 2030's membership.

This report aims to provide an overview of Together 2030 actions undertaken from November 2017 to October 2018. It also intends to highlight the initiative's raised profile by outlining the main activities and successes achieved during its third anniversary as well as flagging opportunities and challenges for next period.

## 2. Together 2030 in 2018

In 2018, Together 2030 focused its work on four main priorities targeting SDGs implementation, partnerships, Civil Society capacity building and resource mobilization:

- Tracking progress and promoting acceleration of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda at all levels.
- Establishing partnerships for concrete action and change.
- Sharing knowledge to strengthen capacity and leverage engagement and participation on implementation and accountability at all levels.
- Generating financial and structural sustainability for the work of the Initiative.

Similarly, Together 2030 set four main objectives in its work plan, which served to frame the work in 2018:

- **Objective 1:** To track progress and promote accelerated implementation of the 2030 Agenda through the participation of diverse and legitimate civil society voices at all levels.
- **Objective 2:** To promote, establish and coordinate activities through partnerships with organizations, networks and other stakeholders.
- **Objective 3:** To create spaces and opportunities to share knowledge, strengthen capacity and leverage the engagement and participation of civil society on the implementation and accountability of the 2030 Agenda at all levels.
- **Objective 4:** To strengthen financial sustainability and reinforce internal structures, governance, communications and transparency of the Initiative.

This report is structured to highlight the main actions undertaken under each objective of Together 2030 work plan outlining activities, results as well as the challenges encountered.

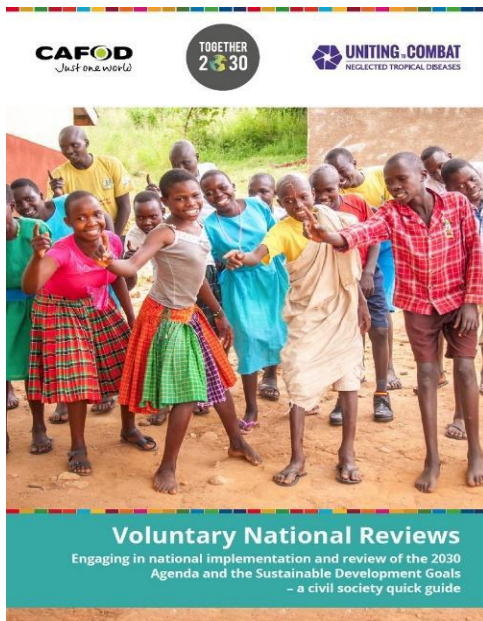


## 3. Tracking progress and promoting accelerated implementation of the 2030 Agenda

### 3.1 Supporting the engagement of CSOs in the Voluntary National Review process

Together 2030 prioritizes civil society and stakeholder engagement in processes leading towards the development of voluntary national reviews (VNRs) presented at the United Nations High Level Political Forum (HLPF). In 2018, once again, Together 2030 developed new resources to support the membership in engaging in such processes and supported Non-ECOSOC members with attending the HLPF as part of the Major Groups and Other Stakeholder registration process. A detailed report on these activities is presented as follows:

#### 3.1.1 Voluntary National Reviews – a civil society quick guide



In partnership with [Cafod](#) and [Uniting to Combat NTDs](#), Together 2030 developed Voluntary National Reviews Engaging in national implementation and review of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals – a civil society quick guide to support Together 2030 members and CSOs to engage in VNR processes. Launched in October 2018, the guide is a short, user-friendly, action oriented resource that offers tips and tools to guide partners throughout the process.

The guide has been distributed broadly including through social media. A webinar to foster discussion around civil society engagement in VNRs and introduce the guide as well as other supportive resources was organized to take place in November 2018. The guide is available in [English](#), [French](#) and [Spanish](#).

### 3.2 Together 2030 at the High-level political forum

As the main space for global review of the implementation of the SDGs, engagement in the HLPF remains a Together 2030 priority. However, one of the challenges this year was the transition in Secretariat support to ensure we advance in full the work leading up to the HLPF including the

mobilization of Together 2030 members, the exchange of information and the facilitation and maximization of space for member participation.

Despite these limitations, for a second year, Together 2030 was able to facilitate the registration of non-ECOSCOC members for the HLPF. With the support of [World Vision](#), a set of criteria were defined and an open process was established to review nominations and proceed with registration. In total, **32 member organizations**, mostly based in Africa, were successfully registered to attend the forum.

### 3.2.1 Written inputs to the HLPF

Ahead of the HLPF, Together 2030 has mobilized its “Global Advocacy Working Group” to prepare a position paper with key messages to governments and stakeholders on the theme selected for the HLPF 2018: “Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies”. A summary of this position paper has been included in the official discussion paper from major groups and other stakeholders to the HLPF 2018.

The [full text](#) was also published at the official HLPF 2018 website as a sectoral paper.



### 3.2.2 Together 2030 side events

Together 2030 had a visible presence during the HLPF 2018. A total of four side events, two during the thematic review week and two during the second week of sessions at Ministerial level addressed issues around the VNR process, SDG implementation and stakeholder engagement.

The side events also served as the stage to present the findings of the third edition of the Perception Survey as well as to launch the recent Parliamentary Handbook. Invitations to such events were broadly shared with members attending the HLPF and other CSOs networks via mailing lists as well as via social media.



### Side events during HLPF 2018:

- **SDG Implementation at National Level: Is Civil Society Being Left Behind? Together 2030 Third Edition of the Perception Survey**- July 11, 2018.  
Host: Together 2030, CEPEI, Newcastle University, Sightsavers, World Vision
- **Voluntary National Reviews: Taking the pulse in Latin America & the Caribbean**- July 12, 2018  
Host: World Vision, Together 2030, and CEPEI.
- **How Transformative, Inclusive and Accountable is the Implementation and Monitoring Process around the Globe**- July 16, 2018  
Host: Together 2030
- **Engaging Parliament in the 2030 Agenda: How can Civil Society and the Parliament work together to protect people and the planet?**- July 18, 2018  
Host: Together 2030, Global Focus and UNDP

*Pictures from Together 2030 side events during  
the High Level Political Forum  
July 2018*





## 3.3 Major Groups and Other Stakeholders Coordination Mechanism

Together 2030 is a member of the Major Groups and Other Stakeholders Coordination Mechanism (MGoS-CM), which aims to advance civil society participation and voice at the UN during HLPF. It is also a full member of its Steering Group as part of the 'other stakeholders active on sustainable development'. Together 2030 acted as one of the Co-Chairs until December 2017.

In April 2018, the Initiative participated in the first face-to-face strategy meeting of the Steering Group of the Coordination Mechanism. This meeting had the purpose of better coordinating an enhancing the engagement of the Major Groups and Other Stakeholders in the HLPF 2018 and the review process in 2019. Together 2030 was represented by Margie Simo from World Vision.

## 3.4 The SDGs at the General Assembly – review of statements made at the 72nd Session (2017)



www.together2030.org

For a second consecutive year, Together 2030 takes a critical look at the official statements delivered during the UNGA General Debate, this time in its 72nd Session. The report "[Is the Agenda 2030 at the Center of the Global Discourse?](#)" analyses how are global leaders referring to the 2030 Agenda in their official statements at the main multilateral global gathering. It analyses specific references to the 2030 Agenda and to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as well as to national implementation plans, the importance of partnerships and of adequate financing in delivering the SDGs.

A Spanish version was produced, thanks to the support of CEPEI, and can be accessed [here](#). Both reports were launched as part of the Together 2030 2nd Anniversary activities in December 2017.

## 4. Promoting, establishing & coordinating partnerships

With the purpose of enabling partnerships for concrete action and change, Together 2030 is actively scoping new partnerships and strengthening old ones to keep underpinning and creating spaces for more collaboration, promotion and participation around the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. In 2018, Together undertook several projects in partnerships with other organizations, as it is described in detail below in this section.



### 4.1 Perception survey report: Third edition

In March 2018, Together 2030 in partnership with Newcastle University launched the third annual perception survey gathering stakeholder perspectives on national follow up and review of the SDGs. The report *From principle to practice: stakeholder participation in Voluntary National Reviews*, focused on two key areas of participation in the 2030 Agenda: (1) How extensive is stakeholder awareness of, and participation in, the process of

country Voluntary National Reviews – including participation by marginalised groups? (2) Have stakeholders seen progress in countries that have undertaken VNRs in previous years? The final report is available [here](#).

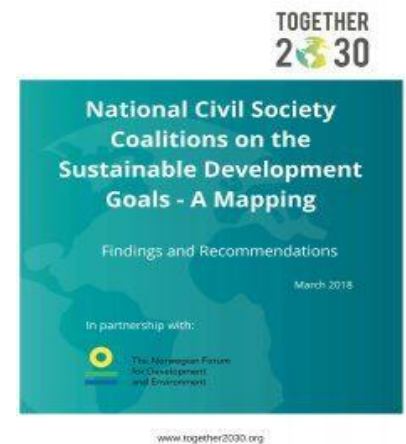
The survey received 264 responses from a range of stakeholders, including national, regional and global organisations. It was shared broadly with civil society and stakeholder mailing lists and via social media from 23 March – 27 April 2018. As noted above, in July 2018 during the HLPF, the findings of the perception survey were presented at a side event organized by Together 2030 and other partners.

### 4.2 Civil society coalitions mapping

In partnership with [Norwegian Forum for Development and the Environment \(ForUM\)](#), in March 2018 Together 2030 launched the report [National Civil Society Coalitions on the Sustainable Development Goals: A Mapping - Finding and Recommendations](#) which aimed to identify examples of how civil society is organizing to promote and follow up on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda at the national level. The purpose of this review is to use the findings to facilitate the creation and strengthening of bonds among coalitions through peer learning and

information exchange and to increase capacity to hold governments accountable for the commitments made in the 2030 Agenda.

The survey received 34 responses from a variety of CSOs with widespread geographic balance and it gathered information on existing national CSO coalitions following up and engaging in the implementation of the SDGs. The report also highlights a series of recommendations for Together 2030 and other international networks and partners on how to collaborate with national CSO coalitions on the SDGs.



### 4.3 Voluntary National Review Analysis Report 2017



Together 2030 joined forces with several CSO partners to produce the report "[Progressing National SDG Implementation](#)" which documents and analyses the 41 English, French and Spanish Voluntary National Review reports submitted in 2017 to the UN's High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF).

The second annual report has been led by the Canadian Council for International Co-operation (CICC) and included Action for Sustainable Development (A4SD), Bond (UK), the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD); the International Forum of National NGO Platforms (IFP-FIP) and others.

The report identifies ten key pillars essential to the effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda and also recognizes emerging good practice, and sets out a range of conclusions and recommendations with respect to how countries can both improve their implementation of the SDGs and use the HLPF as an opportunity for mutual peer learning, knowledge exchange and support.



The report was launched in March 15 through a global Webinar (more details in 6.1 section), ahead of the HLPF 2018. A New York launch also took place on March 27 during a breakfast hosted by the Permanent Mission of Canada to the United Nations.

The report is also available in French, Spanish and Portuguese on Together 2030 [Website](#).

## 4.4 Partnership with Uniting to Combat NTDs

Together 2030 and [Uniting to Combat NTDs](#) joined forces to support civil society tackling neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) at national and local level to actively participate in



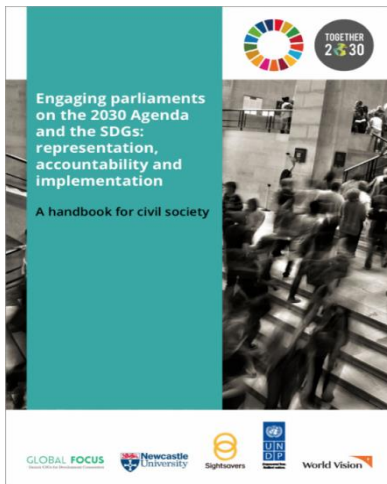
the implementation and accountability of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. Under the partnership, Together 2030 acts as a resource to Uniting to build capacity, provide access to the wider Together 2030 initiative and to link in with national SDG CSO forums.

In March 2018, Together 2030 and Uniting hosted a webinar for national program staff to discuss the opportunities to raise the profile of NTDs by engaging in VNRs. The presentations highlighted government commitment to participatory and

transparent review of the 2030 Agenda. They looked at the goals relevant to NTDs beyond goal three on health, why it is important to report NTDs in VNRs and some NTD successes that could be championed in VNR reports. Discussion emphasized the VNR process as an opportunity to promote the incredible progress being made by NTDs and how the work reflects the indivisibility and cross cutting nature of the goals, contributing and affected by a number of SDGs.

Uniting to Combat NTDs also partnered with Cafod and Together 2030 on the development of the VNR quick guide detailed in 3.1.1 on p6.

## 4.5 Engaging parliamentarians - a handbook



In July 2018, during the HLPF second week, Together 2030 with UNDP, Global Focus, Newcastle University, Sightsavers and World Vision, launched [Engaging parliaments on the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs: representation, accountability and implementation – a handbook for civil society](#). This resource aims to support civil society to engage with parliaments on the SDGs as they play an influential role in ensuring the effective implementation of global commitments through their work on legislation and budgets.

The handbook, launched on July 18, gathered members of parliament mostly from the EU and experts from UNDP, IPU and civil society for discussion and exchange of experience. Abbreviated versions of the handbook are available in [English](#), [Spanish](#) and [French](#).

## 5. Creating opportunities for knowledge sharing, strengthening capacity and leveraging participation

Together 2030 provides a channel for information exchange regarding the implementation and accountability of the 2030 Agenda and opportunities for engagement and participation, especially at the global and regional levels. In 2017, Together 2030 again celebrated its anniversary with a series of special activities to mobilize its membership.

### 5.1 Blogs and Webinars

Through its [blog](#) and [webinar](#) series, Together 2030 provides spaces for its members to exchange, interact and learn. However, this year, due to a more limited Secretariat following changes in April 2018, the Initiative has had to somewhat scale back some of its communication and coordination activities.

## Together 2030 BLOG

From November 2017 to October 2018 Together 2030 members posted **28 blogs**, which included a wide range of topics, from country experiences, to deep analysis of the role of civil society in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. A Special blog series was organized during the 2nd Anniversary of Together 2030

Together 2030 regularly hosts webinars in partnership with other groups, organizations and networks - aiming to create spaces for the discussion of technical and political aspects related to the implementation and accountability of the 2030 at global, regional and national levels.

This year, two webinars were organized including a High Level Webinar during the week of Together 2030 2nd Anniversary. Details as follows:

- *December 2017*

### **High-Level Webinar: Accelerating the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda: From Walking to Running.**

Partners: UN Foundation

Participants: 137 participants

More info [here](#)

- *March 2018*

### **Global Launching of “Progressing National SDG Implementation: An independent assessment of the Voluntary National Review reports submitted to the United Nations High-level Political Forum in 2017**

Partners: the Canadian Council for International Co-operation (CCIC); International Forum of National NGO Platforms (IFP-FIP); Action for Sustainable Development (A4SD); Together 2030; Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD); and WWF-UK

More info [here](#)



## 5.2 Together 2030 second anniversary in 2017

In December 2017, Together 2030 celebrated its 2nd Anniversary and used the opportunity to promote a series of activities to mobilize its membership, create opportunities to exchange

knowledge and information and strengthen the internal structures. The anniversary week took place on December 4-8 and some of the activities included:

#### **Together 2030 2nd Anniversary activities (December 2017)**

- 1) Message sent by the Core Group to the whole membership.
- 2) Special Blog Series focusing on the theme *Accelerating the pace of Implementation – From Policy to Action*: 25 blog posts published including blogs from 17 countries and 3 from global organizations. Views: 1,647; Visitors: 945
- 3) Twitter: Over 80 tweets during the week with key messages and activities of Together 2030.
- 4) Special Webinar (See on section 6.1).
- 5) Launch of three reports: [Together 2030 Activities Report \(Oct 2016 - Oct 2017\)](#); [United Nations 72nd General Assembly analysis report](#); [Análisis de discursos de países de América Latina y el Caribe durante la 72 Asamblea General de las Naciones Unidas](#)

## **6. Strengthening internal structure and governance**

### **6.1 Governance structure**

Together 2030 was initiated by a group of organisations aiming at advance civil society work during the post-2015 negotiations and pushing for the implementation and accountability of Agenda 2030 at all levels. Currently, the Core Group is formed by:

- [CEPEI](#) – (Centro de Pensamiento Estratégico Internacional) (Colombia);
- [JDPC Ijebu-Ode](#) (Justice, Development and Peace Commission) (Nigeria);
- [Philippine Social Enterprise Network](#) (Philippines);
- Save Matabeleland (Zimbabwe);
- [Sightsavers](#) (Global);
- [World Vision](#) (Global)

### **6.2 Working Groups**

Working groups are established to connect interests and facilitate the exchange between members of the Initiative. At the moment, two working groups are active:



- **Global Advocacy Working Group**
- **Mobilization and Engagement of Parliamentarians Working Group**

You can find more information about the working groups and also register to be a member in Together 2030 [Website](#)

## 6.3 Strengthening Social Media

Together 2030 invests in social media to share information about the implementation and follow up of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, to promote the work of the Initiative and its members and to connect with other groups, organizations and people.

As of October 2018, Together 2030 has reached **2,038 followers in [Twitter](#)**, an increment of 26% from last year (1,607).

## 6.4 Financial support for keeping up the work

Core Group members Sightsavers and World Vision International have taken the lead in providing the necessary resources to keeping Together 2020 operational - including covering the costs of its International Secretariat, website, WebEx (for Webinars) and IT structure and other related costs.

For 2018, Together 2030 counted on additional contributions from Uniting to Combat NTDs, Newcastle University, Cafod, and Norwegian Forum for Development and the Environment (ForUM)

## 7. Next steps

The upcoming 2019 will be a pivotal year as for the first time two sessions of the High-level political forum will be held. The first under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council at Ministerial level and the second one under the auspices of the General Assembly at Head of States level.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development clearly calls for this modality of work for HLPF, which can allow for fulfilment of the role of this body.

In addition to the two meetings, the set of SDGs under review are critical. Under review will be SDG 4 on education, SDG 8 on economic growth, SDG 10 on inequality, SDG 13 on climate





change, SDG 16 on peaceful societies and SDG 17 on partnerships and means of implementation.

The theme of HLPF “Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equity” will speak directly to citizens, civil society and overall stakeholders engagement or lack of in the national implementation process of the SDGs.

High on Together 2030 advocacy agenda will be:

- 1. Taking stock of SDGs implementation** at national level
- 2. Establishing partnerships** for concrete action and change
- 3. Sharing knowledge** to strengthen capacities and leverage engagement and participation of civil society and stakeholders.
- 4. Generating financial and structural sustainability** for the work of the initiative

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**You can reach out to us via any of these channels:**

[www.together2030.org](http://www.together2030.org)  
[contact@together2030.org](mailto:contact@together2030.org)

Twitter: @Together\_2030

Facebook: Together2030

***Together 2030** is an open initiative where any civil society, non-governmental, non-profit stakeholders from around the world can join. It is voluntary, informal action-oriented. Information about how to join the Initiative can be found here: <http://www.together2030.org/join-us/>*

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