



Five Messages of the High-Level Event on Follow-Up and Review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Only five weeks after the UN Summit and coinciding with the beginning of the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the High-Level Event with a focus on natural resources, land and soil convened in Nairobi, Kenya on 2 November 2015 and was organized by the Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies (IASS) in collaboration with the UN Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), Landesa, the Global Land Indicators Initiative (GLII), the Global Land Tool Network (GLTN) and with the support of the German Federal Ministry for Food and Agriculture.

Distinguished speakers included Dr. Joan Clos - Executive Director of UN-Habitat, H.E. Ambassador Macharia Kamau - Kenya's Ambassador and Permanent Representative at the Kenya Mission to the United Nations, Alexander Müller - Member of the German Council for Sustainable Development (RNE) and Senior Research Fellow IASS, as well as representatives from UNDESA, FAO, UNEP, UN-Habitat and civil society. Attended by 80 representatives of government, the UN system, civil society and academia, the event resulted in the following five messages:

- 1) **There is a need to build upon the momentum of the adoption of the SDGs to jumpstart implementation of the 2030 Agenda in a new, innovative way.** This requires a shift in mindset and drawing on integrated approaches, coalitions, alliances and networks. The partners of this event aim to bring this debate forward and to work together in order to find concrete ways to use the opportunities and to overcome the challenges we face with moving towards implementation, follow up and review.
- 2) **Land and soil and other natural resources are a crosscutting issue and will support the achievement of many SDGs.** We need sustainable land use and responsible governance. Land is crucial for sustainable development but is also connected with power asymmetries and conflict. In addition, socioeconomic and biophysical indicators will be needed, but beyond that, they must be embedded in processes that allow capturing a range of aspects related to land governance. Therefore, national level multi-stakeholder and right holder processes are crucial for follow-up and review mechanisms and need to facilitate a 'leveled playing field', in particular to include meaningful participation of civil society and address power imbalances and inequality in this regard.
- 3) **Thematic reviews on natural resources such as land and soil can support follow-up and review and more work is needed to define how these can be done.** Thematic reviews of crosscutting issues, especially, land and soil will allow reviewing progress in an integrated manner. They could be conducted at global, regional and national level and contribute to the High Level Political Forum and to the Global Sustainable Development Report.

- 4) **Integrated, inclusive and participatory approaches pose governance challenges and require significant efforts in particular by national governments and civil society in the north and south and by the multilateral system.** Civil society organizations should be seen as allies and not obstacles to the implementation of SDGs as they can support implementation, provide knowledge and information and demand accountability from states. UN agencies stand ready to contribute their expertise but will need to move towards an approach that is pragmatic and goal oriented. This will also require developing partnerships with NGOs and across the UN System to consolidate collaboration and have a common goal.
- 5) **In order to support integrated, participatory and inclusive implementation of the 2030 Agenda, national reviews need to be linked to the global level.** This is crucial to stay true to the interrelated and universal character of the agenda, as actions in one country have consequences in another and vice versa. Here again, alliances and partnerships for exchange and mutual learning will play a crucial role. As shown by the process to design the SDGs, working with many different actors: governments, civil society, academia, etc. may make the process more difficult but also much more valuable. This spirit should be maintained in the follow up and review of the 2030 Agenda.

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