Optimizing Civil Society Participation & Contribution in Environment & Sustainable Development

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What is Sustainable Development?

“...addressing the needs of the present without jeopardizing the ability of future generations to meet their needs”

-Brundtland Commission
Sustainable Development…

“…is broad-based (geographic, sectoral & temporal) and holistic development that people attain for themselves”
Broad-based & Holistic Development

Ecological

Social

Economic

Cultural

Spiritual

Political
Unique Roles Of Development Players

Government
• Vision & Direction
• Legal & Regulatory F/W
• Sets enabling conditions
• Public service
• Resources

Civil Society
• Monitor, Informer, Advocate
• Link/Represent the grassroots & marginalized
• Mobilizer & enabler of communities & sector groups

Business
• Wealth creator
• Sets sustainability of production
• Influences consumption pattern

Resource/Assistance Providers
• Set enabling conditions
  ➢ Financial assistance
  ➢ Technical assistance

Sustainable Development
Civil society refers to the:

arena of uncoerced collective action around shared interests purposes and values

- London School of Economics

broad scope of social relationships whereby individuals voluntarily come together in their individual capacities for a common purpose such as the betterment of society

– Rikkyo Journal of Social Design Studies
Is civil society organization (CSO) the same as NGO?

- Not quite, an NGO is a:
  - task-oriented non-profit, voluntary citizens' group which is organized at various levels, and driven by people with a common interest.
  - legally constituted organization created by private persons or organizations with no participation or representation of government.

- A CSO could represent any sector or “major group”, including an NGO, except government.
Major Groups by UN Definition

- Women
- Youth and children
- Indigenous people
- NGOs
- Local authorities
- Farmers
- Workers and trade unions
- Business and industry
- Scientific and technological communities

These groups are all members of civil society and organizations that represent them are collectively called civil society organizations or CSOs.
Basis for CSO participation:

- Agenda 21* stipulates the need for new forms of participation at all levels to enable a broad-based engagement of all economic and social sectors in making sustainable development happen via (among others):
  - participation in identifying problems
  - designing and applying solutions
  - monitoring results
  - access to information on all SD issues and activities

*Chapter 23: Strengthening the Role of Major Groups
Context of Civil Society in Asia

1. Reversal of trend towards widening of democratic space
   - external security factors
     • 9/11 attack
     • security threat posed by terrorist groups
   - Internal factors
     • Secessionist movements in many countries
     • Political conflicts
     • Political repression

➢ Governments limit/forbid legitimate activities of CSO under the guise of national security.
2. Growing difficulty in mobilizing resources
   • External assistance has substantially contracted and become very discriminating
   • CSOs focus more on developmental projects since resources for policy advocacy has dwindled

3. There has been a shake down
   • Weak organizations folded up
   • Tough and more stable ones are growing bigger & stronger
   • Trend towards networking and federating
Context of Civil Society in Asia

4. Policy and attitude of governments to CS participation widely vary
   – Unsympathetic
   – Lip service
   – Selective engagement
   – Creative engagement (GO-NGO)
   – Meaningful engagement
**Modalities for engaging civil society**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Engagement</th>
<th>Approach</th>
<th>Form/Delivery</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Selective</td>
<td>Consultative</td>
<td>Consultation with supportive groups; Yes to service delivery; No to planning &amp; policy making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managed</td>
<td>Collaborative &amp; Legitimizing</td>
<td>Technical or advisory engagements; experts’ services; consultation meetings; GO-NGO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meaningful</td>
<td>Participative</td>
<td>Multi-stakeholder and community-based mechanisms; participation in development processes; sharing of resources</td>
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## Government Attitude & CSO Activity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership Style</th>
<th>Attitude to CSO</th>
<th>CSO Population &amp; Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Autocratic</td>
<td>Unsympathetic Lip service</td>
<td>Virtually none. Existing ones are underground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Burma)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Controlling</td>
<td>Selective and creative engagements</td>
<td>Moderate. Activities are technical &amp; academic in nature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e.g. Lao PDR, Vietnam)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>Many and vibrant. CSO &amp; government cooperate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e.g., Phil, India)</td>
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CSO Formations/Networks

- Organized by development institutions (e.g. UNEP, ADB, World Bank)
- Sector-based networks (e.g., Solid waste management, Pesticides, Biodiversity)
- Sub-regional networks (e.g. SEACivil Society Environment Alliance, SEA PILO Chemicals Network)
## Avenues for civil society engagement and participation in SD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SD Component</th>
<th>Human Element</th>
<th>Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Institutions (National/Local)</td>
<td>Skeletal System</td>
<td>Multi-stakeholder mechanisms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategies, plans, programs</td>
<td>Flesh</td>
<td>SD policies, strategies, programs, projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soul/Spirit</td>
<td>Ethical, moral &amp; spiritual values</td>
<td>Code of ethics: The Earth Charter</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“National Council for Sustainable Development”

- **Voice** for sustainability & advocate of integrated policies
- **Mechanism** for policy integration
- **Venue** for problem solving
- **Means** for cooperative action and commitment forging
- **Vehicle** for promoting awareness & info dissemination
- **Mechanism** for M&E of implementation of national/local strategies
Multi-stakeholder NCSDs

- Iran * Japan * Korea
- *Mongolia * Marshall Islands
- * Nepal * Palau
- * Cook Islands * Philippines
- * Thailand * Vanuatu * Vietnam
- *Kazakhstan

Purely Government
(usually in the form of Environment Council):

- Tajikistan * Uzbekistan

Organizing:

Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Sri Lanka, Pakistan
Impediments to NCSD creation & utilization

- There are existing government mechanisms (e.g., NEC, MOE)
- Governments are not prepared for multi-stakeholder participation (do not trust CSO)
- Governments are faced with organizational issues, e.g.,
  - Role and functions of NCSD vis-à-vis existing bodies (Indonesia)
  - CS roles and representation (Bangladesh, Indonesia)
Impediments to NCSD creation & utilization

- CSOs are adversarial and do not trust Government
- CSOs lack capacity and capability (technical, financial, political)
- Sometimes CSOs lack leadership, cooperation and unity
Lessons learned:
For meaningful participation of civil society

• “Trust Begets Trust” – (re)build mutual respect and trust between CSO & government
  – Understand each other’s contexts
  – Level off expectations
  – Respect individual views and opinions

• “No Free Lunch” - promote sharing and counter-parting
  – Invest time, effort & resources
  – Organize, strengthen the ranks, build own capacity
  – Assist build stakeholder capacities
Lessons learned:

For strengthening CSO stability and sustainability

• Be innovative in approaching organizational sustainability, e.g. entrepreneurial governance
• Establish networks
• Promote communication & sharing of info & knowledge
• Engage in “Big sister – Small sister” scheme
• Undertake joint or cooperative projects
The Earth Charter:

- Serves as universal code of ethics for changing attitudes & personal actions
- Provides principles for building a just, sustainable & peaceful society
- Serves as an inspiration to developing global interdependence & shared responsibility
- Gives guidance in SD actions and advocacy
Earth Charter is important because it…

- Challenges us to examine our values & choose a better way of doing things
- Helps us find common response in the midst of diversity
- Encourages us to find & share an ethical vision
Earth Charter’s Evolution

1992 - NGO Forum proposed to Earth Summit
1997 - Earth Charter Commission formed
1997 & 1999 - Benchmark Drafts I & II issued
1997-2000 - EC bodies created & consultations & internalization seminars & conferences conducted
Jun 2000 - Final document launched in The Hague
2000 to present – continuing initiatives and actions especially in relation to the UN Decade for Education and SD
General Principles

- Respect Earth & life in all its diversity
- Care for the community of life with understanding, compassion & love
- Build democratic societies that are just, participatory, sustainable & peaceful
- Secure Earth’s abundance & beauty for present & future generations
Ecological Integrity

- Protect & restore the integrity of Earth’s ecological system
- Prevent harm as the best method of environmental protection
- Adopt production, consumption, & reproduction patterns that safeguard Earth’s regenerative capacities, human of ecological sustainability rights, community well-being.
- Advance study of ecological sustainability
Social & Economic Justice

- Eradicate poverty as an ethical, social & environmental imperative
- Promote human development in an equitable & sustainable manner
- Affirm gender equality & equity & ensure access to education, health care, & economic opportunity
- Uphold the right of all to natural & social environment
Democracy, Nonviolence & Peace

- Strengthen democratic institutions; provide transparency & accountability in governance, participation in decision making, & access to justice.
- Integrate in education the knowledge, values & skills needed for a sustainable way of life
- Treat all living beings with respect & consideration
- Promote a culture of tolerance, nonviolence & peace
Some ways to “live” the Earth Charter:

- Promote change in attitudes & values, integrate it in:
  - development & sustainability plans
    - professional work ethics
  - education & training curricula
  - spiritual & religious teachings
    - popular culture

- Internalize & translate it into daily living
  - consume in sustainable way
    - be a responsible citizen
    - set good example
  - Organize/join a group & undertake projects
Sustainable development is not something governments do for the people...
It is something people achieve for themselves.

-Maximo T. Kalaw, Jr.
Domo Arigato Gozaimashita!