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More information

More information about the PFD can be found at <http://capacity4dev.ec.europa.eu/policy-forum-development/>

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Glossary

ACDEG	African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance
AGA	African Governance Architecture
AGI	Association of Ghana Industries
AGP	African Governance Platform
AMC	Agyemang Management Consult
APRM	African Peer Review Mechanism
AU	African Union
AUABC	AU Anti-Corruption Body on Corruption Issues
CRE	Centre for Research and Enterprise
CSPS	Centre for Social Policy Studies
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
CUA	Credit Union Association
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DFID	Department for International Development
DUC	Dominion University College
ECOSOCC	Economic, Social and Cultural Council
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EIMF	Environmental Impact Management Framework
EU	European Union
FBOs	Faith Based Organisations
FCNG	FAKA Cooperative Network Ghana-FAKA Coop
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
GPRS	Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy
GBA	Ghana Bar Association
GCC	Ghana Chamber of Commerce
GCM	Ghana Chamber of Mines
GMA	Ghana Medical Association
GSGDA	Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agenda
ICAG	Institute of Chartered Accountants Ghana
ICMC	Institute of Certified Management Consultants
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
ILG	Institute of Local Government Studies
ISODEC	Integrated Social Development Centre
KIs	Knowledge Institutions

IYC	International Year of Cooperatives
Las	Local Authorities
LEAP	Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty
LGS	Local Government Service
LGWU	Local Government Workers Union
MDAs	Ministries Departments and Agencies
MDBS	Multi-Donor Budget Support
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MMDAs	Metropolitan Municipal and District Assemblies
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NALAG	National Association of Local Authorities of Ghana
NACHU	National Cooperative Housing Union
NDPC	National Development Planning Commission
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NGAMANG	NGAMANG Group of Social Enterprises, Civil Society Organisations and Knowledge Institutions
NISMF	National Indicator Setting Management Framework
NSEZ	Northern Savanna Ecological Zone
NYEP	National Youth Employment Programme
PAP	Pan-African Parliament
RCC	Regional Coordinating Council
SADA	Savannah Accelerated Development Authority
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SEND	Social Enterprise Development Foundation
SIMF	Social Impact Management Framework
TUC	Trade Union Congress
UCLG	United Cities and Local Governments
UG	University of Ghana
UN	United Nations
UNSC	United Nations Statistics Conference
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VRRO	Vulnerability, Risks and Resilience Outline
WFP	World Food Programme
YDF	Youth Development Foundation
YEI	Youth Entrepreneurship Initiatives
YEIC	Youth Enterprise Incubation Centre

1. Executive Summary

After fifteen years of implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the world has agreed to implement a new agenda, dubbed Agenda 2030, to shape development policy at the national, regional and global levels. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are to be implemented between 2016 and 2030, will require active participation and commitment of key development stakeholders, including government agencies, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), Local Authorities (LAs) and citizens. This report explores the initial steps for the implementation of Agenda 2030 in Ghana as well as the role of CSOs and LAs in that process.

This research, initiated by the Policy Forum on Development (PFD), contributes to the effort of exploring which national approaches support an inclusive implementation of the goals in Ghana. The methodology for the research involved a comprehensive literature review, a survey and in-depth interviews. Initially, related literature on the subject was reviewed to set the context for subsequent discussions. A sample of 100 respondents, including representatives from CSOs, LAs, government agencies, the private sector as well as multi-stakeholder groups were engaged in a survey to gather opinions on critical issues of the SDGs. Finally, experts were engaged to clarify issues that came out of the survey.

One of the first findings is that the country's economic and political environment is conducive for the implementation of the SDGs. Ghana's current democratic credentials are among the best in Africa. Besides, the country has drawn up and implemented various development plans since 1957 when it became politically independent. Even though it has been confronted with numerous economic challenges, the economy achieved lower middle income status in 2007, and it still remains one of the best performing economies in Africa.

In parallel, apart from being actively involved in the various engagements at the international level to deliberate on the formulation of the SDGs, Ghana has realigned some targets of its national development agenda to be in line with the focus of the SDGs. As the current development plan phases out

in 2017, Ghana will begin the implementation of a 40-year development plan in 2018. An effort has also been made to synchronise the objectives of this plan with the targets of the SDGs¹.

However, the implementation of Agenda 2030 in Ghana faces a number of initial overall challenges that need to be taken into consideration:

1. Ghana needs to live up to its lower middle income status by stimulating the productive sectors of the economy to generate the required revenue. It must take on robust and ambitious growth and development strategies which will attract the expected foreign direct investments (FDIs).
2. The economic development, social inclusion and environmental management of the SDGs' expanded scope are put on an equal and equitable footing and this will require additional efforts, given the needed human and financial resources to achieve them.
3. Government needs to show leadership and commitment to the implementation of the SDGs by playing an active role, including adequate coordination of the implementation and mobilisation of the needed financial resources for effective implementation of the SDGs.
4. Inclusive partnerships involving, among others, CSOs, LAs and the private sector need to be developed and properly coordinated to ensure that all actors effectively participate and contribute in their respective niches in a complementary and reinforcing manner instead of at cross purposes.

¹ NDPC, (2015b),

The study devotes particular attention to the role played by CSOs and LAs during the implementation of the MDGs and, particularly, at present time, during these first months of implementation of the SDGs.

Despite a number of relevant challenges, such as inadequate funding and lack of appropriate human capital, CSOs played very important roles during the implementation of the MDGs in Ghana. While the strong CSOs with better credentials to attract donor funding were more visible, the predominant weaker CSOs also contributed their share in making sure Ghana was successful in achieving the MDGs. Currently it is seen as a step in right direction that the national Government, through the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC), has already set up a CSO platform for the SDGs with the main intention of creating opportunity for effective collaboration with the latter in order to ensure their active participation in the implementation of the SDGs.

The situation is somewhat different in the case of LAs, which have different mandates and niches and do not usually work together in a coordinated manner. Local authorities have been active in MDG implementation and the NALAG has already launched several coordination and training efforts to raise awareness about the SDGs and facilitate multi-stakeholder engagements at local level. While they regard themselves as a group and work together to achieve a common set of objectives, there seems to be a lack of incentives to develop more cohesive approaches to act together. So far, that has also been the case in these first months of debate about the implementation of Agenda 2030.

Finally, while twelve months into implementation of the SDGs appears too early to expect tangible outputs, a road map indicating how to achieve the desired results needs to be put in place by the lead state institutions to whip up the interest of the general public. The study proposes a number of recommendations to the different stakeholders that have an influence in the implementation of Agenda 2030, from the national government to development partners. They include a wide array of issues, including: a) promoting strong leadership

and commitment to SDG implementation by sticking to policies and plans developed and timely resource allocation, b) enacting coherent new laws/policies/plans which are needed to align Ghana's development plans with the SDGs and Agenda 2063, c) acting together to encourage inclusive partnerships with CSOs and LAs for the implementation and monitoring of SDGs, d) strengthening the capacity of different stakeholders to participate effectively in SDG implementation and advocacy, and e) seeking out and empowering the most vulnerable and marginalised groups in SDG implementation.

2. Introduction

Ghana is located on the West Coast of Africa. It became the first country to attain political independence from colonial rule in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), on the 6th of March 1957. At that time, prospects were very high for the country to become economically independent as well. The country's average income of about \$200 was among the highest in the SSA region. Besides, the country was endowed with deposits of mineral resources and highly productive plants for agricultural production. As a small, open economy heavily dependent on international commerce, the main approach to development was an *import-substitution* strategy adopted to encourage local firms to produce enough goods and services to replace imports while providing jobs for Ghanaians.

The socialist inclined government of Kwame Nkrumah, the first president of Ghana, adopted central planning with the conviction that the resources of the state would be employed in the best interest of all people. His political ambition and economic aspirations were however cut short through a military-cum-police intervention in 1966. The governments that followed put in place several policies to develop Ghana. However, issues such as oil price hikes in the 1970s, incessant drought, economic mismanagement and political instability negatively impacted development prospects.

After subscribing to neo-liberal economic reforms introduced by both the IMF and the World Bank in the early 1980s, the economy started experiencing an appreciable level of growth. The reforms were accompanied by abnormally high capital inflows that led to overall balance of payments surpluses in spite of persistent current account deficits. Among other things, implementation of the reforms registered considerable improvement in infrastructure, especially in the area of road construction. However, because the reforms were designed in accordance with the neo-liberal orthodoxy, little attention was paid to the adverse effects of their implementation on the poor. For instance, considerable numbers of public sector workers were not adequately compensated during retrenchment exercises.

By the end of the implementation of the reforms, there were both internal and external demonstrations demanding democratic rule. Civil society organisations (CSOs) and a number of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) sprung up to become voices of the voiceless. Partly as a result of this, the Government initiated a democratic process in 1988 that finally returned the country to constitutional rule in 1992, after many years under military dictatorship. In January 2001, Jerry John Rawlings, who had ruled since 31st December 1981 as both military and civilian leader for 19 years, handed over power to John Agyekum Kufour of the opposition New Patriotic Party (NPP). The country's democratic credentials deepened and, in 2008, the NPP lost power to the National Democratic Congress (NDC), the political party of Jerry John Rawlings. Ghana goes to elections in 2016 after being governed by the NDC for the last eight years.

The political stability the country has enjoyed, coupled with large inflows of foreign capital and the start of oil production, has propelled the economy to grow at an average of around five percent during the last two decades. However, the poor have not participated actively in the growth of the country. Again, the impressive growth appears not to have affected the structure of the economy which has virtually remained the same since independence. For most of the post-independence years, the agricultural sector has been the main contributor to GDP and employment. This has changed over recent years as the services sector has taken over as the leading contributor to GDP.

Ghana has been very active in the global discussions to reduce poverty. In the year 2000, the country subscribed to the Millennium Development Goals (MGDs). Among other things, policies and programmes were put together to halve the 1990 level poverty by 2015. The improved economic growth rates and various social intervention programmes initiated after the year 2000 appear to have resulted in a drastic reduction of the level of poverty from 51.7% in 1991 to 24.2 % in 2013, propelling the country to achieve MDG number one. However, there is evidence of increasing inequalities in income and consumption between different

groups in Ghana. For instance, inequality as measured by the Gini coefficient increased from 0.373 in 1992 to 0.430 in 2006. Indeed, Ghana's Gini coefficient of about 0.43 in 2006 remained high compared to developing countries such as Burundi and Togo.

Significant social achievements have been chalked up in the area of education and gender in Ghana. While there used to be only three traditional public universities, the country can now boast of over forty universities, including ten public universities. Gender equality in educational attainment has been improving as well; the proportion of adult women who have acquired a secondary education or higher increased from 5.7% in 1998 to 11.5% in 2006 (see Figure 3).

Ghana's performance in the MDGs has been described as mixed. It is therefore important that strategies be put in place to sustain the gains while efforts are made to address the pitfalls. The SDGs appear to provide an effective framework for addressing these concerns. This research, using mixed methods, observation and participation, focuses on the role of national strategies to promote the implementation of Agenda 2030. In particular, it explores the relationship between the instruments and mechanisms established at national and sub-national levels and the role of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and Local Authorities (LAs) in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Ghana.

Relevance of Agenda 2030 for Ghana

The adoption of the SDGs in September 2015 changed the global development framework from an emphasis on economic development as a means to poverty reduction to a comprehensive framework for sustainable development. It lays equal emphasis on economic development, social inclusion and environmental management, and collectively contributes to eradicating poverty in a socially and environmentally sustainable manner.

The adoption of the SDGs shifts Ghana's development path that had so far been on economic growth and development with less emphasis on social inclusion and especially environmental considerations (Ghana MDGs 2015 Report, p.73).

The SDGs therefore present a heightened challenge to Ghana, not only to meet the complex fabric of 17 Goals and 169 targets, in terms of its priorities and targets, but also to put equal emphasis on all three broad components of the SDGs - economic development, social inclusion and environmental management.

At the same time Ghana has to depend on its own resources (to the extent that it is no longer a least developed country) to meet its obligations under the SDGs. It must also show that its *Lower Middle* income status is not merely a macroeconomic issue but reflects in the microeconomic and sustainable development dynamics affecting all segments of national life, especially at the grassroots levels.

Ghana's Reception of SDGs

'SDGs' is becoming a buzzword in all sectors of Ghana. There is a historical mutual respect and commitment between Ghana and the United Nations. Ghana was the first sub-Saharan African country to produce a Secretary General of the United Nations in the person of Mr Kofi Annan. Incidentally, it was during the tenure of his office that the MDGs were adopted at the UN General Assembly. Again, the recent appointment of Ghana's, President John Dramani Mahama, by the United Nations Secretary General, Ban Ki Moon, as co-chair with Erna Solberg, Prime Minister of Norway, to lead 16 eminent persons to advocate for support and momentum for the achievement of SDGs, illustrates the trust between Ghana and the United Nations.

In addition to the government initiative, there have been capacity building activities in the country, like conferences and seminars on the SDGs. Although research indicates that a segment of Ghanaian society does not know much of the content of the SDGs, it has been accepted as an important document with Government planning of its programmes and policies towards their implementation. Besides, processes and plans for domesticating and localising the SDGs do not appear too clear. Apart from the few who were privileged to be part of the various processes for designing policies, plans, programmes and projects to achieve the SDGs, a considerable proportion of Ghanaian society does not know how these will be either implemented or monitored.

One of the measures that the national government, through the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC), has initiated to increase the general awareness about the SDGs is a *CSO platform for SDGs* intended to provide a focal point for effective collaboration between state agencies and the CSOs. Apart from the platform ensuring active participation and involvement of the CSOs, it will also provide a place to air their grievances if they identify any shortfalls in the implementation process. Complementing the effort of CSO engagement in the implementation of SDGs in Ghana is the establishment of the *SDGs Philanthropic Forum* to garner the involvement of the various philanthropic organisations in Ghana for their participation and contribution to SDG implementation. The forum has a secretariat at the Ghana

Office of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Again, with the support of the World Bank, Ghana Statistical Service (GSS), a state agency, started the process of conducting a baseline national survey in 2016 to serve as the basis for evaluating the SDGs. A private initiative going beyond sensitisation and education into training and capacity building is the development of training and capacity building modules on how to assess SDG preparedness, domesticate, implement and monitor the SDGs. The training modules have been designed by the Institute of Certified Management Consultants (ICMC), a subsidiary of NGAMANG Group, for all stages of domestication, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of SDGs by all sectors and multi-stakeholders. Training is available through ICMC workshops and tailored in-house sessions on request.

Towards a new agenda: main country priorities

The current development agenda, the Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agenda (GSGDA II, 2014 – 2017) has been analysed to see the extent to which it attempts to address the SDGs. About 70% of SDG targets are reflected in GSGDA II. Ghana has taken a long prospective view towards developing a 40-year development plan. Interestingly, the implementation of the SDGs and the preparations for the 40-year Development Plan (from when to when) fairly coincide, making this report both timely and premature. It is timely because the assessment of the status of SDG implementation stands a better chance of being taken into consideration for the development of the 40-year development plan. It is premature because not much has been done in terms of specific SDG policies, plans, programmes and project implementation, as the SDGs were adopted only late last year, coming into force January 2016.

Within the framework of achieving all of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 targets, Ghana initiated a prioritisation process based on the country's specific needs. Hence the UN Country Team in Ghana, the Government of Ghana and Civil Society Organisations generated ideas on the initial priorities that should constitute phase 1² of the series of 4-year plans of Ghana's Post-2015 development agenda through broad-based debates and consultations. The following priorities resulted from the process:

- 1. Employment:** Despite consistent economic growth, employment remains a critical development issue, especially for the educated youth.
- 2. Youth Development:** National youth policies demand sufficient budgetary allocation to youth development actions. At the same time, skills development programmes for youth are needed.
- 3. Education:** There is an urgent need to make education relevant to the needs of industry and practical and vocationally oriented, especially for those entering the job market, including technical and vocational graduates, tertiary and university graduates.
- 4. Poverty:** A multidimensional perspective is required for poverty reduction.
- 5. Health:** Teeming health challenges need to be comprehensively addressed.
- 6. Food Security:** Food security needs to be addressed through sustainable agricultural and food policies and programmes that focus on the key drivers of progress.
- 7. Social Protection for Vulnerable Groups:** Vulnerable groups such as women, children, the disabled, migrants, minorities and displaced persons need special attention and targeted interventions which address their fundamental needs and provide the capacity to be self-reliant.
- 8. Urbanisation:** The negative effects of urbanisation need to be addressed and forestalled through proper planning, the provision of vital amenities and infrastructure, and expansion of the urban economy to meet the growing needs of the population.
- 9. The environment and climate change:** Increasing drought and perennial flooding, especially in the food-producing centres of the three regions of northern Ghana, in addition to massive over-exploitation of environmental resources in all sectors (forestry, fisheries, mining, etc.) are pressing challenges that must receive priority policy attention in the national quest for both sustainable development and poverty reduction.

In view of the fact that, for MDG implementation, slow progress was made in some areas such as: full and productive employment (MDG 1B), equal share of women in non-agriculture wage employment, women's involvement in governance (MDG 3), reducing under-five and child mortality (MDG 4), reducing maternal mortality (MDG 5), reversing environmental resource loss and improving sanitation (MDG 7), the above set of identified priorities will help the country to focus much attention in making a positive impact in these areas during the implementation of the SDGs.

2 The National Development Planning Commission (NDPC), the state agency responsible for the SDGs, was in charge of the preparation of the document that has become the main official document on SDGs in Ghana.

Ghana's CSOs and LAs

Ghana's CSOs

Ghana's CSO sector can be categorised in several ways. Research has identified five types of CSOs operating in the country, namely:

- Weak Local CSOs
- Strong Local CSOs
- Think Tanks
- International CSOs and
- Cooperatives and Trade Unions.

The Local CSOs, which are mostly Faith Based Organisations (FBOs), exhibit the most extreme form of freedom of association in Ghana. Local CSOs can either be described as strong or weak. The strong CSOs are commonly referred to as capacity building CSOs because they tend to build the capacity of other CSOs. Some strong CSOs undertake research and also engage in policy advocacy. They tend to build a common front as coalitions and work together in networks, which then makes it easier for donors to reach them. In Ghana, the strong CSOs are well represented in some of the regions. They are well funded by donors and therefore are capable of attracting or poaching the best human capital for their activities.

On the other hand, weak CSOs in Ghana are mostly NGOs and Community Based Organisations (CBOs) which are underfunded and, therefore, cannot afford to hire some of the best human capital for their operations. Even though they tend to operate at grassroots level and are closer to their beneficiaries, they are not able to have the required effects on them because of the numerous challenges they face in their operations. Even though they are many, they are fragmented, weak and do not coordinate activities as coalitions to complement each other's efforts. Instead, they often engage in unhealthy competition for funds and attention. This therefore undermines their capacity to contribute meaningfully in the various processes of SDG implementation. Indeed, the uncoordinated nature of their activities makes it difficult for them to attract the funds needed to effectively engage in monitoring and evaluation of their programmes.

The issue of the sustainability of CSO operations remains a challenge for most CSOs in Ghana, primarily because of funding. There is unbridled competition for funds in the CSO sector with the strong CSOs (and lately international CSOs) usually having an edge over the weak local CSOs. There is therefore a need for an affirmative funding mechanism to grow and empower weak local CSOs to be productive in the discharge of their services. This has become important in order for the people at the grassroots, where both international and strong local CSOs barely operate, to have access to the services of CSOs.

Think Tank CSOs operate more as knowledge institutions and often engage in policy research, advocacy and capacity building. International CSOs originally act as funding intermediaries for multilateral, bilateral and private funding sources to both strong and weak local CSOs. However, due to global financial difficulties and the decentralisation of global funding to country portfolios, especially bilateral funding, international CSOs have changed their strategy to have local in-country and regional presence, in which they hire local staff, thereby reducing their funding and capacity transfer roles to engage in direct implementation activities in competition with local CSOs.

This study has noted the existence of CSO networks and platforms such as the Ghana NGO Coalition on the Rights of the Child (GNCRC) and the Ghana Coalition of NGOs in Health. However, respondents opined that some coalitions, platforms and networks have also complicated the CSO environment by getting involved in programme and project implementation, thus further duplicating efforts instead of sticking to their core mandate of coordination, capacity building, networking and resource leveraging for CSOs. Donor efforts at coordinating competitive bidding funds for CSOs through agencies such as STAR Ghana have worked to a large extent. However, many weak local CSOs appear to have been excluded mainly because of a lack of capacity to compete favourably with the strong CSOs. It is therefore feared that such multi-donor coordinated funds will further weaken the CSO sector, unless the mechanisms and funds are separated into small, medium and large categories with different requirements for each tier, as all types of CSOs have their own niche and roles to play.

The 'one-size-fits-all' context clearly does not augur well for an effective and coordinated CSO role in designing, implementing and monitoring policies, plans and programmes to achieve the SDGs. Much has to be done on the coordination front among CSOs. Previous efforts at coordination, self-coordination and self-regulation have not worked well, though they are deemed to be the only means to bring sanity to the CSO sector in Ghana. Although respondents hoped that the SDGs would bring such goodwill, it is difficult to tell whether the SDGs will rally around CSOs to achieve the needed coordination as well as provide the appropriate platform for all CSOs to meaningfully contribute their quota. Indeed, several CSOs interviewed have already complained of exclusion in the design of the SDGs. It is therefore important that the NDPC ensure that the *CSO platform for SDGs* and the *SDGs Philanthropic Forum*, become effective in bringing all CSOs on board during the implementation of the SDGs in Ghana.

There are emerging and innovative CSO models. Notable among them is the NGAMANG Group of social enterprises which promotes inventions, innovation, sustainability and green economy enterprises, especially for youth employment, jobs and entrepreneurship, and mobilises the vast untapped potential of faith-based philanthropy, corporate giving, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and impact and greenfields investments. These have great potential to impact SDG implementation in Ghana thanks to its innovative cost recovery and self-financing mechanism for CSOs and social enterprise sustainability. For example, the Youth Development Foundation (YDF), a CSO subsidiary of the NGAMANG Group focuses on youth jobs, employment and entrepreneurship which are likely to impact rural, urban and migration challenges facing many unemployed youth in Ghana, whilst covering its costs for sustainability via a social entrepreneurship approach³.

As recognised in relevant EU Communications 2012, the Cooperative Movement is made up of the sector of CSOs representing collective enterprises democratically owned and governed by their members. Research found that, except in a few cases, such as the Credit Union Association (CUA), pharmaceuticals (which is mainly in Greater Accra), and a

few strong agricultural cooperatives scattered throughout Ghana and the NGOs which support them, such as the FAKA Cooperative Network Ghana (FCNG), the entire cooperative movement needs to be supported to be more effective as it has happened in Cote D'Ivoire, Kenya and elsewhere in Africa, and thus impact on the SDGs. A new cooperative law needs to be passed and the Cooperative movement needs to be empowered to harness the value of Cooperatives to Sustainable Development such as acknowledged by the Rome Food Organisations of the United Nations International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and the World Food Programme (WFP)- which jointly issued a statement recognising Cooperative Impacts in the World, as the UN declared 2012 the International Year of Cooperatives (IYC)- (International Cooperative Alliance-ICA, 2012).

In general, the Ghanaian CSOs have exhibited potential in engaging themselves in public sensitisation and education, advocacy, capacity building and professional development⁴. They perform these duties by engaging appropriate government agencies, other CSOs and local communities.

- CSOs in Ghana have the ability to influence public policy through either being at the table during the early stages of policy formulation, advocating and defending the tenets of the policy and also influencing the choices made by political actors.
- CSOs in Ghana also empower people to better their lives physically and economically through capacity-building and awareness creation.
- Another area of impact is the ability of CSOs to respond to social interests. CSOs in Ghana undertake this function in three main ways: by providing social amenities, undertaking voluntary work, and influencing social norms and attitudes.

3 www.ydfghana.com

4 <https://www.wacsi.org/attachment>

Ghana's LAs

Ghana's LA sector is not as diverse as the CSO sector and it has its own characteristics. The main organisations coordinating local authorities are:

- The National Association of Local Authorities of Ghana (NALAG) set up as a NGO, which brings all Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) together. NALAG is a member of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), West Africa Branch
- The Ghana Local Government Service (GLGS), a statutory service which recruits and places personnel in service of the Local Government System in Ghana
- The Institute of Local Government Studies (ILGS), an education, training and research institution for Local Government, and
- The Local Government Workers Union, a labour union associated with Ghana's Labour Movement, TUC.

The LA sector in Ghana has different mandates and niches which do not usually work together in a coordinated manner. While members of the identified groups always see themselves as a group and work together to achieve a common set of objectives, coordination among the groups appears very weak. In other words, the organisations appear strong and unified as individual groups operating in a very weak uncoordinated sector. There appears to be more room for LA groups to close ranks and work together on issues of concern, especially those of the SDGs. There were, however, few instances where some of the groups had to work together. For instance, NALAG occasionally coordinates with the ILGS to train their staff. Respondents explained that the 'fragmentation' in the LA sector could be due to 'individualisation of mandates'. This contrasts with what is observed in the CSO sector where the actors compete to deliver a similar set of objectives and therefore see themselves as actors in the same field. The study observed through the interviews that the LA organisations should also have their own '*Local Authorities' SDGs Platform-Ghana*' to address their unique and special concerns to enhance engagement.

Sensitisation about the SDGs appears not to have caught on so well with all the identified groups in the LA sector. However, NALAG has been making efforts to educate its members on the SDGs through several media. For instance, during the 2016 Annual Delegates Conference, NALAG conducted awareness raising and sensitisation on SDG implementation for the 1,020 participants selected from the various MMDAs in Ghana.

The research also found that, through an ongoing research programme, NALAG has been collecting data on NGO registration and activities in all districts in order to forge an alliance with them. This is a laudable effort to promote cohesion between the LA and CSOs sectors.

More education on SDGs is, therefore, still necessary, not only for the players in the LA sector but also for the actors in the CSO sector. Apart from the officials of the LA and CSO sectors, there is also an urgent need to inform, educate, train and build the capacity of all officials of the public and private sectors, knowledge institutions, the media and the general public on the SDGs in order for them to appreciate the need to contribute their share for successful implementation of the goals in Ghana.

Brief SWOT analysis of Ghana's Policy Forum on Development (PFD) Members and the SDGs

SWOT-CSOs

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wide spread presence of CSOs all over Ghana • Presence of a mix of CSOs • Presence of some CSO Platforms and Networks that can be improved and coordinated for SDG achievement 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Widespread lack of capacity within CSOs and in the CSO sector • Lack of capacity to work with the SDGs • Duplication of efforts • Unhealthy competition for recognition and funds • Weak coordination of efforts • Lack of self-regulation
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Favourable liberal legal, regulatory and political environment for CSO development • The SDGs present opportunities for participation, coordination, self-regulation and controls • Opportunities offered by Ghana's other regional and global commitments for participation by tying them with SDGs and CSO own activities 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of government funding for CSOs • Lack of support by regional and continental bodies-AU and ECOWAS for CSO growth and domestication of regional and continental commitments by CSOs • Dwindling of funds for CSOs • Potential government intervention due to some CSO abuses

1.5.2. SWOT-LAs

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established local authority system with decentralisation practice for several decades • Infrastructural development • Knowledgeable and committed leadership and staff • Capacity to seek out needed expertise 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procedure for selection of all assembly members and election of district chief executives. Instead of democratically electing all assembly members, some assembly members and the district chief executives are appointed by the President of Ghana • Lack of collaboration among LA organisations • Limited awareness and capacity to work with the SDGs • Lack of programmatic funding • Weak publicity of activities • Weak fund raising
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wide acceptance of LA activities in Ghana among rank and file of citizens • Wide acceptance of SDGs among citizens • Local, national and global goodwill towards the LA sector 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential competing organisations likely to enter the LA sector if LAs are not proactive

3. Learning from the past

Ghana's achievements in implementing the MDGs

Ghana prepared and implemented various development policy frameworks between 2000 and 2015, when the MDGs were implemented. These included the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS I), a comprehensive policy document prepared as a pre-condition for Ghana to benefit from a significant measure of debt relief under the Highly Indebted Poor Country Initiative (HIPC). Implemented between 2001 and 2005, GPRS I was primarily focused on improving the macroeconomic environment to address critical issues of poverty. While GPRS I registered some successes, another document, the Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (GPRS II), was prepared and implemented between 2006 and 2009 to sustain the gains and also address some identified pitfalls. The Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agenda (GSGDA I [2010-2013] & GSGDA II [2013-2017]) followed to achieve and sustain macroeconomic stability while placing the economy on a higher path of shared growth and poverty reduction. The following specific programmes and projects came out of the various development policy frameworks:

- Introduction of a national health insurance scheme
- Free maternal healthcare
- The National Youth Employment Programme (NYEP)
- The Savannah Accelerated Development Authority (SADA)
- A school meals programme
- Free school uniforms
- Capitation grant
- Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP)

Implementation of these development policy frameworks contributed significantly to poverty reduction. The level of incidence of poverty, which stood at 51.7% in 1991, declined to 39% in 1999 and further to 24.2% in 2013, ensuring that Ghana achieved the MDG 1. Apart from this, significant progress was made in the following areas of development: halving the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water (MDG 7B), improving access to primary education

(MDG 2A) and ensuring gender parity in primary school (MDG 3). Substantial progress was also made in reducing HIV prevalence (MDG 6C), increasing access to ICT (MDG 8F) and reducing the proportion of people suffering from hunger (Ghana 2015 MDGs Report).

Key lessons learnt in the execution of these programmes and projects were the unnecessary politicisation and neglect of environmental sustainability issues. As a result of political expediency, the political parties that had opportunity to rule Ghana during the period hijacked the social intervention programmes and where possible, made sure their supporters were the key beneficiaries. This always made the opposition parties' members feel excluded. Again, environmental issues under the MDGs were mostly neglected. While water supply to urban dwellers saw significant improvement during the period, quite a number of rural communities are today struggling to get water because the rivers that used to supply them are polluted through illegal mining activities. The illegal mining activities, popularly referred to as '*Galamsay*' are flourishing because of the alleged political patronage they are currently receiving. Therefore, environmental concerns under the SDGs, are likely to be ignored once again.

Ghana's challenges in implementing the MDGs

In spite of some achievements made by Ghana toward the realisation of the MDGs, there is still a lot more left to be done. The GSS Report on the progress of MDGs (2013) identified challenges in many areas:

- **Environmental degradation.** The continuous loss of forest and arable land remain a challenge to agriculture productivity. Climate variability has also not been adequately addressed.
- **The increasing debt burden.** The country continues to record higher debt to GDP ratios mainly as a result of its inability to increase revenue to meet unbridled spending.
- **Access to improved water sources:** While acknowledging some amount of improvement, the MDG target on access

to improved water sources in Ghana is a matter that needs critical attention.

- **Sanitation:** Issues such as lack of toilet facilities in most homes across the country were seen as a major challenge. Poor waste management in Ghana, especially in Accra and Kumasi, is mainly due to the lack of appropriate dumping sites.
- **Challenges of urbanisation:** Population growth and movement, especially of the younger generation without adequate opportunities for employment, housing and sanitation facilities leading to growth of poverty laden and overcrowded slums, with its corresponding hopelessness, making many youth engage in risky migrations out of Ghana to Europe by sea/or via the Sahara desert. Ghana has not performed very well with respect to achieving the MDG 7 on reducing the proportion of the urban population living in slums.

Participation of CSOs and LAs in MDG implementation

CSOs and LAs have been part of the development process of the Ghanaian economy, playing different roles since independence. The activities of some of the CSOs, especially the local ones, became very pronounced during the implementation of the MDGs. This was not surprising because the MDGs were implemented eight years after Ghana had returned to democratic rule and many associations were springing up to be part of the democratic process, ostensibly to protect and ensure the rights of the citizenry. Notable among these were the *strong local* CSOs such as: the Centre for Democratic Development (CDD), the Institute of Democratic Governance (IDEG), the Institute of Certified Management Consultants (ICMC-Ghana), the Youth Development Foundation (YDF), Defence for Children International (DCI)-Ghana Section, IMANI-Ghana, the Third World Network (TWN) and the Centre for Economic Policy Analysis (CEPA). The new ones teamed up with existing ones such as the Integrated Social Development Centre (ISODEC), the Youth Development Foundation (YDF), the Christian Council of Ghana, the NGAMANG Group and the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA) to ensure that the MDGs were implemented.

The CSOs organised a series of workshops and conferences to draw the government's attention to some of the areas/

goals they considered were being neglected. MDGs became benchmarks for measuring government performance. Some of the CSOs actively participated in ensuring that specific MDGs were achieved. For instance, ISODEC was very active in the effort to ensure gender parity in Ghana (MDG 3). It organised several workshops and used its media mouthpiece, *Public Agenda*, to actively engage the citizens on the importance of educating girls. According to ISODEC, where appropriate, it teamed up and sometimes had to undertake research to support its advocacy. For instance, on realising that the Government could not singlehandedly ensure gender parity in education, ISODEC conducted research to assess private interventions in the education of girls in 2004 and used the results to campaign for more involvement of the private sector in girls' education.

Indeed, various reports had indicated active participation of the strong local CSOs and international CSOs in the implementation of the MDGs in Ghana. Among these reports were the seven series of biennial reports called *Ghana Millennium Goal Reports* put together by the Government with support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to examine progress made towards achieving the MDGs. The 2015 edition of the *Ghana Millennium Goal Reports* was mainly to serve as a forerunner to the adoption and implementation of the SDGs. Other reports that also acknowledged the contribution of CSOs to MDG implementation included National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) Annual Progress Reports, IMF country reports and research reports by organisations such as ISODEC, the Youth Development Foundation (YDF), UNICEF, Oxfam, the NGAMANG Group and the SEND Foundation.

While the aforementioned reports appear to have concentrated on activities that had direct links with the implementation of MDGs, the interviews revealed that CSOs such as ISODEC, the SEND Foundation, the Third World Network and Oxfam initiated, hosted and funded CSO Advocacy Networks on several themes that were indirectly related to the agenda of the MDGs. These included budget tracking, the extractive industry, anti-corruption and food security. For instance, while the activities of the extractive industry were of prime concern to the achievement of MDG 7, attainment of food security was relevant to MDG 1.

Interactions with the CSOs indicate that most of the weak CSOs or their coalitions were side-lined in most of the national discussions that had to do with implementing and monitoring the MDGs. It came out during the interviews that registered coalitions such as the *Ghana NGO Coalition on the Rights of the Child* and the *Coalition of NGOs in Health* were never invited to participate in any official government engagement on MDG implementation. In spite of this neglect, some of the weak CSOs managed to align some of their activities with MDGs. Indeed, strong local CSOs, think tanks and international CSOs dominated the space for participation because they seemed to have the technical expertise and financial wherewithal to either participate in the implementation process or act as monitoring agents on issues that appeared technical.

This lack of participation by weak CSOs is further complicated by the lack of a coordinated front for CSOs, especially weak local CSOs; further checks reveal that the few registered Coalitions such as the Ghana NGO Coalition on the Rights of the Child and the Coalition of NGOs in Health were not invited to participate in the official government processes. This notwithstanding the activities of the CSO sector by default did coincide with MDGs as several had aligned their activities with the MDGs once they were adopted.

The reports that assessed the implementation of MDGs in Ghana acknowledged the active participation of the LAs. As the base of the governmental machinery, the LAs, through the MMDAs, were active in several local government interventions mentioned in the reports. However, the reports did not mention direct participation of LA agencies such as the National Association of Local Authorities of Ghana (NALAG), the Institute of Local Government Studies (ILGS), the Local Government Workers Union, or the Local Government Service in the various official engagements on MDG implementation.

Evaluation and reporting on the MDGs in Ghana

The National Development Planning Commission (NDPC), a state institution responsible for economic planning, was the main institution officially mandated to monitor and evaluate the progress made towards achieving the MDGs in Ghana. As part of the evaluation process, the NDPC, with support from the UNDP, did seven series of biennial reports. According to the Ghana MDG 2015 Report, the NDPC always engaged the knowledge institutions to help with the evaluation of the MDGs that fell in their areas of expertise.

Apart from this, other stakeholders such as the IMF and some CSOs also monitored the process and made invaluable suggestions. The media also took turns to highlight issues that were considered to be an aberration of the implementation of the MDGs. The media could assess and make predictions on the MDGs that were likely to be achieved through engagements with academia and other knowledge institutions.

Role of Ghana's Development Partners in promoting CSO and LA participation in Ghana's implementation of MDGs

Since Ghana's transition to democratic rule, and particularly as a result of the continuous progress in democracy, good governance and economic transformation, the country has become a preferred partner to many donors and development partners, and this has further enhanced the flow of development aid into Ghana. Ghana therefore received a considerable amount of funds during the MDGs period. While some of the aid inflows were project and programme specific, others came in the form of Multi-Donor Budget Support (MDBS), where donor funds were channelled into a particular 'basket' for onward distribution among projects and programmes. The World Bank and the European Union were major multilateral donors, while the Netherlands and the United Kingdom were major bilateral donors (Ghana MDGs Report, 2015).

However, the favoured status for aid started to change when the country rebased into lower middle income status in 2010. It is reported that "since Ghana attained lower middle income

status in 2010, aid inflows have been dwindling. In nominal terms, net ODA inflows rose from US\$1.24 billion in 2006 to US\$1.81 billion in 2012, representing a 6.4 percent average annual increase over the period. However, inflows dropped by 26 percent to US\$1.3 billion in 2013. As a percentage of GDP, net ODA inflows declined steadily from 6.1 percent in 2009 to 2.8 percent in 2013⁵.

Within this framework, *Development Partners* have initiated mechanisms for a coordinated framework to fund civil society in light of the fragmentation of the CSO sector. One such framework for donor support to CSOs has been STAR Ghana: a multi-donor funded initiative supported by the DFID, DANIDA and the EU to support the creation, utilisation and institutionalisation of spaces for collective civil society engagement in order to increase the responsiveness of the executive and key state institutions at both local and national levels. For example “STAR-Ghana has initiated a series of activities to inject £22 million to develop a vibrant, well-informed and assertive civil society, able to contribute to transformational national development for all Ghanaian citizens in an inclusive manner”⁶. STAR Ghana supports CSOs, including community based organisations, media organisations, research and advocacy organisations, cooperatives, trade unions/labour organisations, private sector associations and registered civil society coalitions/networks/platforms in the governance sector irrespective of size, typology, location or programmatic focus.

However, in reality, and as it came out during the interviews, it is the strongest who get the funding irrespective of whether they have a grassroots impact or not. Also, this funding mechanism is more democracy and governance oriented towards elections and minimises its focus on other social inclusion, economic development and environmental issues.

Although Ghana’s development partners require the active participation of CSOs and LAs in their aid packages, including those that support the designing, implementation and monitoring of policies and programmes to achieve the MDGs, the sheer lack of governmental mechanisms to assure

CSO and LA participation in a rational and comprehensive manner has meant that the aims of the development partners in assuring participation at all levels were not met. Several CSOs expressed that the participation in donor schemes was selective, chequered, unplanned and uncoordinated. As has always been the case, the mutual respectability and trust already existing between the development partners and Ghana will encourage the Government to open more spaces for participation in a comprehensive, rational and effective manner for CSOs and LAs.

Realising Present Needs

In January 2016, the government, through the NDPC, reminded Ministry Departments and Agencies (MDAs) and MMMDAs to pay particular attention to the indicators of the SDGs reflected in GSGDA II and already being implemented. As indicated earlier, the NDPC did a reappraisal of GSGDA II, a four-year Medium Term Plan (2014-2017) to ascertain the extent of its alignment with the SDGs. The appraisal indicated that 70 percent of the SDGs were already covered by GSGDA II. A decision was therefore made to concentrate on the implementation of the 70 percent indicators of the SDGs identified in the GSGDA II document while efforts are put in place to consider the remaining 30 percent of indicators of the SDGs in the 40-year development plan whose implementation commences in 2018⁷.

Towards this end, awareness creation and capacity building has begun and is on-going in all the ministries and departments of the state as well as in the municipal and district assemblies across the length and breadth of the country to get them ready for a full implementation of the SDGs in 2018. Those areas that made slow progress in the MDGs such as full and productive employment (MDG 1B), equal share of women in non-agriculture wage employment, and women’s involvement in governance (MDG 3), reducing under-five and child mortality (MDG 4), reducing maternal mortality (MDG 5), reversing environmental resource loss and improving sanitation (MDG 7) are all given particular attention. The MDGs have been amalgamated with the SDGs so any unfinished business could be addressed within the new

5 Ghana MDGs Report, 2015

6 2015, Ghana News Agency-GNA; www.ghana.gov.gh

7 NDPC, (2015b),

context. Furthermore, the implementation and monitoring of the SDGs are being localised to address issues of inequality and socio-economic disparities more effectively as well as ensuring broader ownership and facilitating the achievement of SDGs within the period of their implementation (Ghana MDG Report, 2015).

Policies, legal frameworks, programmes and other mechanisms that promote the implementation of the Post-2015 Agenda

Two Frameworks readily lend themselves as the policy and programme mechanisms through which the SDGs can be achieved:

- In the short and medium term, the research found that the current medium-term framework **GSGDA II (2014-2017)** has been assessed to identify the extent of alignment and gaps with the SDGs. Data will also be collected to establish the baseline of those issues that are not captured in the national M & E framework. However, the SDGs encapsulate the MDGs, which are already included in GSGDA II, hence Ghana has addressed some 70% of the SDG issues and will address all 100% of SDGs in 2018. The research also found that the alignment of MDA and MMDA Plans with the SDGs has started for all 24 MDAs and 216 MMDAs.
- In the long term, the research found that the SDGs have been incorporated in the proposed **40-year long-term** plan and will be rolled out in a series of four-year medium-term plans by 2018. CSOs have actively participated in the debate, formulation and design of the 40-year development plan and will also have a space in its implementation. The 40-year development plan is centred on an inclusive and resilient economy, equitable and healthy society, safe and sustainable communities, effective and efficient institutions and the influential role of Ghana in international affairs. Experts from a range of academic backgrounds were tasked to engage the general public, including the CSOs and LAs, to put together an evidence-based document that addresses the aspirations of all Ghanaians.

Participation and Role of CSOs and LAs

The National Technical Steering Committee (NTSC), made up of the NDPC, MMDAs and CSOs, was set up to provide technical support to Ghana during the period of negotiating for the SDGs. Two leading CSOs, namely, the Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA) and the International Growth Centre (IGC) were actively involved in this process. After the end of the mandate of the NTSC at the end of 2015, it was transformed into a cross-sectoral planning group. The old members, including the MFWA and the IGC, will be maintained while efforts are currently underway to include faith based organisations, academia and the private sector. The main function of the group will be development of sector strategies to cover specific SDGs. The formation of the group is advanced and there is a plan workshop in the middle of September 2016 to continue the process. No identifiable group of LAs such as NALAG, the ILGS or the GLGS is directly involved except that members from the MMDAs also belong to the LAs.

In a related development, the MFWA is currently hosting the *CSO Platform for SDGs* independently from the Government, a move that the NDPC appreciates, as long as there is a common front for the Government to deal with the CSO Platform. The CSO Platform for SDGs has 17 working groups, each for a goal of the SDG and an 18th overarching working group for synthesis of all related activities.

Two other CSO interventions relevant to SDGs have emerged in the area of philanthropy. One involves international foundations such as the Ford Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation and others wanting to assist in developing a philanthropic and foundation culture in Ghana. At the moment foundations are treated like other CSOs and are not regulated separately. These moves have led to the setting up of the Philanthropy Platform hosted by the UNDP. The other intervention relates to the National Forum for Philanthropy attended by government, CSOs, development partners and the private sector. CSOs that felt excluded from MDG implementation but had the opportunity to attend the National Forum for Philanthropy, contacted subsidiaries of the NGAMANG Group for the creation of the *Coalition of CSOs for SDG Implementation*. Key issues at the Forum were

developing indigenous philanthropic culture and foundations in Ghana, coordination and capacity for CSOs, streamlining private sector and cooperative involvement and corporate social responsibility (CSR). A steering committee was set up with three working groups on:

- Faith-based and Indigenous Philanthropy
- CSOs and
- Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).

The research found that there are still coordination issues to iron out as there are overlaps in these recent developments. Also **50% of CSO respondents** (Figure 4 and Appendix 2), and especially those from the weak CSOs, still report lack of spaces to participate in the processes leading up to the adoption of the SDGs and implementation.

Even though the NDPC appears to be trying to involve all stakeholders, including the CSOs, the diverse mandates, interests and concerns of different stakeholders do not make coordination an easy task.

Both Ghana's Trade Union Congress (TUC) and the Cooperative Movement in Ghana need to be proactive in the implementation of the SDGs and also input their data in the mainstream coordination of data at the NDPC. Other professional associations, including the following, could collaborate with the NDPC during the implementation of the SDGs: the Ghana Bar Association (GBA), the Ghana Medical Association (GMA) [and other Health Professional Associations], the Ghana Institute and Institution of Engineers, the Ghana Institutes of Architects and Surveyors, the Institute of Chartered Accountants Ghana (ICAG), the Institute of Certified Management Consultants (ICMC-Ghana), the Chartered Institute of Marketing, the Chartered Institute of Public Relations, the Institute of Human Relations, the Associations of Economists, Planners, Public Health, Social Workers, Counsellors, Psychologists and Others.

Participation of marginalised groups

Even though the study identified marginalised groups such as physically and emotionally challenged persons, children, women, youth, northern migrants in the southern cities, urban slum dwellers, unemployed youth, urban poor youth, rural poor and young girls, there is no official record of participation of any of them in the planning process for SDG implementation. Not even registered associations including the Associations of Vulnerable Groups, the Women Farmers Federation, Homeless Ghana, Street Kids Ghana, Ghana Domestic Workers, Ghana People Living with HIV/AIDS were either invited or consulted during the planning process for the SDGs. While the NDPC reported that the concerns of vulnerable groups such as disabled persons, children and women would be addressed in the implementation of Ghana's SDGs, interactions with these groups indicated that they were abandoned and excluded during the planning process.

For effective implementation of the SDGs, it is important that all interest groups be involved at all levels of the implementation of the SDGs. The NDPC can initiate an effort to identify and record the involvement of vulnerable groups in the implementation and monitoring of the SDGs. This can be done by engaging some members of the vulnerable groups to reach out to the entire groups. This deliberate process can be christened: **National Vulnerable Groups Identification and Registration**. Using this process, a comprehensive resilience plan can be developed for vulnerable and marginalised groups. This is necessary because improvement in the general well-being of the vulnerable groups will be counted as part of the success story of the SDGs in Ghana.

Political, policy and operational level

Ghana has shown initial political will to implement the SDGs by its public launch by the President, John Dramani Mahama. The President's recent appointment to co-chair the *UN Committee of 16 Eminent Persons* with the Prime Minister of Norway gives further credence to Ghana's political commitment to implement the SDGs. Apart from this, Ghana's medium- and long-term plans have all been designed to align with the implementation of the SDGs. Currently, the Ghana Statistical Service (GSS), a state institution, is in the process of conducting a national survey to serve as a baseline for assessing the implementation of the MDGs in future.

While six months into implementation of the SDGs appears too early to expect tangible outputs, a road map indicating what ought to be done in order to achieve the desired results needs to have been put in place by the lead state institutions to whip up the interest of the general public.

Multi-stakeholder coalitions active in support of the Post-2015 Agenda

At this moment, there is no official record of the existence of any multi-stakeholder coalitions for SDGs. However, the NDPC has a system that involves stakeholders in the planning process called the cross-sectoral planning groups. These groups include a CSO platform and a philanthropy platform. Even though the CSO coalitions are diverse and uncoordinated, they have the potential to forge collaborations with coalitions in the private sector, the media, and knowledge institutions to establish multi-stakeholder coalitions. A semblance of a multi-stakeholder coalition could be established around the first National Philanthropy Forum.

Existence of a territorial approach to favour the localisation of SDGs

The study identified four territorial zones that could be adopted during SDG implementation to meet specific zonal needs. The zones are:

- SADA Zonal Approach
- Forest Zonal Approach
- Marine-Coastal Approach and
- Cities Territorial Approach.

The SADA Zonal Approach: This zone consists of the three northern regions [Northern Region, Upper East Region and Upper West Region] and the northern parts of the Volta and Brong Ahafo regions. This area is by no means the poorest ecological zone in Ghana. It is characterised by flat land covered by grass. It receives hot sunshine during most of the day and is sparsely populated. It is a potential food basket for Ghana, with solar energy potential, yet to be harnessed. It experiences an average of five months of rainfall over the whole year. However, because of the topography of the area, it easily gets flooded whenever it rains. The perennial flooding coupled with long periods of drought, affect the number of days available for farming during the year.

There is significant migration of people (mainly youth) to the southern part of the country. The Savannah Accelerated Development Authority (SADA) was set up by the Government to give special attention to the poverty situation in the zone. SADA recently [June, 2016] organised a planning workshop for the localisation of the SDGs in the zone. The NDPC can ride on this territorial approach to address the special characteristics and needs in the ecological zone.

Forest Zonal Approach: This zone is rich in forest and extractive natural resources. It comprises the southern part of the Brong Ahafo Region, the whole of Ashanti, the Eastern regions and parts of the Western and Central regions. The zone contributes significantly to Ghana's gross domestic product (GDP). Parts of the zone are undulating with wind paths that are useful for wind energy generation. A different developmental strategy, including prudent use of natural resources and conservation of forests and biodiversity, is required for this Zone.

Marine Coastal Approach: This consists of Greater Accra, Southern Volta, the Southern Central and Southern Western Regions bordering the sea. The off-shore oil rich zone has special challenges, including oil rush related urbanisation, a high cost of living and oil pollution. It is susceptible to potential marine related climate disasters due to rising sea levels. There is a need to preserve and protect marine life and aquatic biodiversity as indicated in SDG 14. It has great wave energy potential. It hosts some of the cities that are at the centre of the changing urban growth dynamic which is going to be one of the key opportunities and challenges Ghana will deal with during implementation of the SDGs.

Cities Territorial Approach: Ghana is becoming more urbanised in a manner that had not been anticipated. Therefore, most of the cities are not well planned and have inadequate facilities and amenities to meet the growing influx of people. The resultant effect is the increasing cost of living, inadequate housing, poor sanitation, limited supplies of water and poor transportation services. The characteristics of this territorial approach include spatial inequality and poverty, unplanned child birth and large families. While popular cities such as Tema, Kumasi, Takoradi and Accra need urgent attention, there is a need to give special attention to fast growing cities such as Tamale and Techiman to avoid population explosion. CSOs and LAs have roles to play and several models by knowledge institutions in this research have a bearing on making Ghana's cities sustainably resilient. The idea of building new affordable houses, including by the private sector, should be encouraged. The National Cooperative Housing Union's (NACHU) effort to provide affordable and decent housing and infrastructure to low-income urban communities in Kenya could be a great lesson to Ghana⁸.

Added Value of SDGs

CSOs and LAs feel that the SDGs add value to their work, through a number of concrete factors:

1. The broadened scope of the SDGs enables them to complement their work with those elements which previously were not their core mandate but are relevant to it.
2. It enables more interaction with multi-stakeholders, encouraging cross-fertilisation of ideas.
3. It has also opened up the government machinery to more consultation than it was without the SDGs.
4. It puts their national and local actions in the regional, continental and global perspectives with the SDGs, Agenda 2063 and the Paris Climate Protocols.
5. They also have the opportunity to showcase their work more, and to receive feedback from others on areas for improvement and best practices.
6. The consultative and negotiation skills of the CSOs and the LAs are improving.

8 NACHU (2016)

4. Strengthening the means to achieve the SDGs

As indicated earlier, several factors like adequate policies, plans, resources and a sound institutional framework are needed to work together to achieve the SDGs. The study observed from the implementation of the MDGs and other development plans how these factors should be strengthened to ensure smooth implementation of the SDGs in Ghana. This section therefore presents a set of ideas to augment the means of achieving the SDGs.

Mechanisms, coalitions and policies enabling the achievements of the SDGs

As stated earlier, the study identified some mechanisms, coalitions and policies as having the potential to facilitate the achievement of the SDGs⁹:

- GSGDA II (2014-2017): even though GSGDA II started before the introduction of the SDGs, it has since been realigned to accommodate the tenets of the SDGs
- Developing a 40-year Development Plan to be ready by 2018: the first 13 years of Ghana's 40-Year Development Plan coincide with the implementation of the SDGs. Therefore, the SDGs have been adopted and aligned with the overall objectives of the 40-Year Development Plan
- Four-year Medium-Term Development Plan emanating from the 40-year Development Plan
- MDA Plans
- MMDA Plans
- Multi-stakeholder coalitions recommended to be promoted by the NDPC
- Sectoral coalitions feeding into the multi-stakeholder coalition concept.

Beyond Poverty and Development to Sustainable Development

While in the past development strategy has focused on reducing poverty, it has now become important that the mechanisms adopted should be sustainable enough to address future poverty as well. SDGs seek to secure today's development while working to ensure that tomorrow's development is not compromised. In other words, whatever approach is used to secure poverty reduction and development should not compromise the ability of the future generation to generate its own wealth to ensure development. That the period of implementation of the SDGs is being considered as the foundation period for Ghana's 40-Year Development Plan is enough evidence of Ghana's commitment to sustainability development. The issues of environmental management are comprehensively captured by the 40-Year Development Plan to ensure a sustainable environment.

Informing and involving a wider audience

As noted earlier, the study stated that the success of SDG implementation depends largely on the involvement of all sectors of society, including the public sector, the private sector, knowledge institutions, the media, CSOs, LAs, and citizens. This is possible if the general public is aware of the goals and key targets through education, awareness raising, sensitisation and advocacy using appropriate tools (Advocacy Tools kit, etc.). The study identified the need to involve representatives of all multi-stakeholders in training to teach them how to incorporate the SDGs in their work.

⁹ NDPC.2014 www.ndpc.gov.gh

This may include breaking down the SDGs and national plans into sectoral plans. The research found that training modules on these topics have been developed by the NGAMANG Group of knowledge institutions and CSOs, the Institute of Certified Management Consultants (ICMC-Ghana), the Youth Development Foundation (YDF), and AMC Consulting which can be adopted or adapted to train multi-stakeholder groups. Training programmes should be organised for public sector officials, law makers, civil servants, private sector leaders, media leaders, CSO leaders and LA leaders and the leaders of knowledge institutions.

Setting a good leadership example for the SDGs

The stakeholders interviewed noted that the Government, represented by public officials and institutions such as the NDPC, is expected to show an example of good leadership and commitment to the implementation of SDGs by adhering to the policies and plans laid down. The State Agencies already appear to be leading the way through their collaboration with the NDPC to ensure that SDG implementation is on course. The Government's commitment to this effort is evidenced by the realignment of GSGDA II objectives to address the implementation of the SDGs in Ghana.

Existing structures to be elaborated or improved

The following structures should be reorganised and improved to contribute to successful SDG implementation:

- Capacity building is key for Ghana's success with the SDGs. All sectors need training on how to integrate SDGs in their work and how to design, implement and monitor policies, programmes and projects under the SDGs.
- SDG desks could be opened up in all MDAs and MMDAs with focal persons in charge to take care of issues related to the SDGs. In order not to create new positions, existing officers and units can be designated for SDGs.

- Passing of the cooperative law, which has remained in Parliament for a long time, would strengthen the cooperative sector as a member-based, people-centred, democratically owned type of business and create a conducive environment for cooperatives to operate independently (devoid of governmental interference) in the interests of their members.
- Effective coordination of the following groups: the private sector, media organisations, knowledge institutions, professional associations, faith based organisations, vulnerable groups, trade associations and farmer-based organisations.

Role of Ghana in encouraging the participation of CSOs and LAs

Many stakeholders interviewed during the research phase of this study agreed that it is the duty of the Government, working through the NDPC, to encourage both the CSO and LA sectors to coordinate their diverse activities in tandem with SDG implementation. Apart from this, respondents of the survey agreed that the Government could provide financial resources to support CSO and LA participation in the implementation and monitoring of SDGs. It also came out as a suggestion that Government could lobby and encourage its development partners to fund the activities of CSOs and LAs that are in line with the implementation and monitoring of SDGs'. Other suggestions from the respondents included:

- Government providing funds to train officials of CSOs and LAs on SDG implementation and monitoring.
- Government needs to encourage the private sector, knowledge institutions, the media and others to support CSOs and LAs to participate effectively in the implementation and monitoring of SDGs.
- Government and MMDAs should team up with CSOs and LAs to educate the public about the SDGs.

5. Conclusions

Ghana has implemented the SDGs since January 2016. Among other things, the country had to realign the focus of the ongoing development plan, the Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agenda (GSGDA II), to make room for the SDGs. GSGDA II is due to end in 2017 and its successor, the 40-Year Development Plan, which will start in 2018, has also given due consideration to the implementation of the SDGs in Ghana. As part of this effort, a series of workshops has been taking place to sensitise and create awareness among all 24 MDAs and 216 MMDAs across the country.

Indeed, the implementation of the SDGs in Ghana has to garner a lot of lessons from the implementation of the MDGs. There is an urgent need to strategize to scale up gains made during the implementation of the MDGs while efforts are made to address the pitfalls. For example, it could be concluded, based on the field evidence, that more attention needs to be focused on environmental management during the implementation of the SDGs. Again, while the country prevailed in its effort to reduce the 1990 incidence of poverty by half, it is still possible and important to strengthen poverty reduction strategies so that by 2030, the incidence of poverty in Ghana will be closer to zero.

Another lesson necessary for the implementation of the SDGs is the involvement of key development actors such as the CSOs and LAs in the implementation of the MDGs in Ghana. The study found that the CSO sector is considerably fragmented and organisations are always competing among themselves for dwindling funds. The study also found that while registered LA groups were not directly involved in the implementation of the MDGs, the districts and municipalities became the fulcrum around which a lot of things that had to do with the implementation of the MDGs revolved.

Based on these lessons and the role of CSOs and LAs as important development actors, it was concluded that pragmatic strategies should be put in place for their active involvement in the implementation of the SDGs if Ghana is to emerge as a successful country in 2030. A robust training programme needs to be put in place for the CSOs and local

governments, both weak and strong, to fully appreciate how to work with the SDGs in their areas of operation. The international CSOs and development partners such as the EU, IMF and UNDP could encourage and work with the Government throughout the duration of SDG implementation.

As a country, it appears Ghana faces the challenge of having to take all three components of the SDGs in the next phase of its implementation by 2018. This will be an ambitious programme requiring a substantial amount of financial resources. This notwithstanding, the country's economy is in crisis and aid inflows have gone down since it achieved lower middle income status. The study therefore concludes that internal mobilisation of resources could be a key to the effective implementation of the SDGs in Ghana. The tax network should be widened to ensure that businesses, especially those in the informal sector, pay taxes while the cooperative bodies are encouraged to pay appropriate tax rates. Again, the Government should improve the mechanisms to avoid corruption from tax collectors.

6. Key messages and recommendations

Key Messages

- Ghana attained lower middle income status and subsequently lost much of the financial and other benefits provided to least developed countries. Therefore, the country will depend largely on its own resources to meet its obligations in achieving the SDGs.
- There have been public engagements and capacity building activities in the country for SDGs. Although the research indicates that a segment of Ghanaian society does not know much of the content of the SDGs, it has been accepted as an important document with Government tailoring its programmes and policies towards their implementation.
- The public sector, especially the central government, is the main actor in the implementation of the SDGs in Ghana. The NDPC is a lead state agency responsible for coordinating, designing, implementing and monitoring the policies and plans to achieve the SDGs. The NDPC has also been responsible for the alignment of the SDGs with Ghana GSGDA II, the current four-year Medium Term Plan 2014-2017. Adequate preparations and plans have also been made to align the SDGs with Ghana's 40-year, long-term development plan that is due to start in 2018.
- Ghana made some gains during the implementation of the MDGs. There were, however, some challenges mostly as a result of which some of the MDGs were not achieved. Government has therefore taken stock of the pitfalls in order to work on them to ensure successful implementation of the SDGs in the country.
- Active participation of Ghana's CSOs and LAs in the implementation and monitoring of the SDGs is necessary and needs to be supported. So far there has not been much active CSO and LA participation in the implementation of the SDGs since it began at the beginning of the year. In parallel, Ghana is yet to put in place multi-stakeholder coalitions for the implementation of the SDGs.
- Ghana lacks national statistical and data management capacity. Tracking progress for different groups and geographical levels cannot be done without developing a strong administrative statistics system with the potential to generate statistics at short intervals and in a timely and accurate manner.

Recommendations

AU and ECOWAS

- Request that Ghana, as part of its poverty reduction effort, develop/implement policies for promoting cooperatives as sources of financing for the poor.
- Invite diverse Ghanaian CSOs and LAs to participate in continental and regional activities that have a direct bearing on the SDGs.

Ghana's National Government

- Utilise the co-chairmanship of the UN Committee of 16 Eminent Persons to advocate for international support for the implementation of SDGs in Ghana.
- Exhibit good leadership and commitment to the implementation of SDGs by sticking to policies and plans developed as a result of the SDGs.
- Strengthen internal mobilisation efforts to generate the required revenue needed to support SDG implementation.
- Ensure policy, legal and regulatory coherence in the recognition of the specificities of CSOs in the enactment and passing of new laws, contributing further to an enabling environment for CSOs.
- Train all stakeholders and sectors in Ghana, including CSOs, LAs, the private sector, the media, faith based organisations, politicians, civil servants and technocrats, to incorporate the SDGs into their own spheres of activity.
- Open SDG desks in all MDAs and MMDAs with focal persons and resources to work as a one-stop-shop for all SDG information to coordinate well with the NDPC.
- Develop a strong administrative statistics system, with the potential to generate statistics at short intervals on relevant to assess the achievement of the SDGs.



CSOs and LAs

- Develop platforms (e.g. of LAs) to act together in support of the implementation of the SDGs.
- Coordinate the activities of coalitions of both CSO and LAs together with NDPC and MDAs to ensure inclusive participation in the implementation, monitoring and advocacy of SDGs.
- Strengthen CSO and LA organisational and resource management capacity for effectiveness, efficiency, transparency and accountability in SDG implementation.
- Develop programmes to promote specific areas related to the SDGs like, for example, the creation of resilient cities, the promotion of gender equality, the fight against environmental degradation, the increase of food security, the protection of the rights of marginalised groups, etc.
- Support the creation of jobs, employment and self-employment opportunities for the teeming youth in rural and urban areas in SDG implementation.
- Strengthen the cooperative movement within the country.

Ghana's Development Partners

- Provide funds to publicise and implement the content of this document and to provide technical assistance for CSOs to align their activities with the SDGs.
- Encourage the Ghanaian Government to implement the SDGs.
- Advise the Government to take proactive steps to encourage CSOs and LAs to actively participate in the implementation and monitoring of SDGs.
- Build the capacity of CSOs and LAs to actively participate in the implementation and monitoring of SDGs.

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