Minutes from 25 January Meeting on Outreach and Communications for the Global Civil Society Platform on Sustainable Development

On 25 January, 2016 the Global Civil Society Platform on Sustainable Development held its first working group on Outreach and Communications. The purpose of the event was to consider the platform’s naming and branding, website functionality and communication plan. Below is a summary of the meeting’s key talking points. For the group to make decisions on these matters, we ask that you take the following 5 minute survey: https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/CommsOutreach

Introduction to platform

The platform has been developed over the course of the past year with key meetings in Tunis (World Social Forum), Addis Ababa (Conference on Financing for Development), New York (SDG Summit) & Paris (COP21). In total, the preliminary meetings engaged over 1,000 people.

As a result from these meetings, a Transitional Steering Group was formed to help manage a consultative process to design organisational objectives and activities. This group consists of four major global networks: CIVICUS, IFP, GCAP and CAN International. This process is learning from the experiences of action/2015, B2015 and GCAP, with the focus of engaging civil society networks around the world.

In December, following a meeting in Paris an Action Plan was released and we are now working over the next 3 months to agree on a platform framework including: Communications & Outreach; Resourcing & Projects; and Governance & Membership. This framework will be finalised between now and April so that we come together in Bogota, Colombia for International Civil Society Week to help plan ahead for the coming years.

Notes from 1st Working Group Meeting on Communications and Outreach

-Branding

The group considered a preliminary list of name proposals for the platform. The names ‘Sustainable Development Action’ and ‘Sustainable Development Now’ received the widest support from webinar attendees. The working group is encouraged to provide additional suggestions for names and terms that should be associated with the platform by filling out the aforementioned survey.

Guiding principles for developing the brand are as follows:
- Should be translatable
- Should not include acronyms

As a timeframe, we will collect feedback on current and additional names until 5 February and produce an updated shortlist of branding options which will then be shared with a design team to develop logos and other artwork.
-Web development

An overview of the Loomio group’s functionality and tools was provided to explain how online conversations are being facilitated. The primary benefits of using the Loomio group is that users are able to participate in conversations via discussion boards and make democratic decisions using polls and surveys. Members are encouraged to comment on these functionalities and other tools that should be considered for the site via the survey.

It is envisioned that we will ultimately be moving these tools and our online materials to a more extensive website such as Wordpress or Drupal. Members are encouraged to provide examples of current websites that could serve as templates for our site’s eventual upgrade.

-Other matters discussed during the meeting were:

- The possibility of using a creative commons license for our online resources. This type of copyright would encourage the public to re-use and share our content with our network.
- The possibility of using a wiki-style format, which would allow users to edit page descriptions and to upload their own content to the website. Meeting participants expressed reservations of using a wiki-style format, as it will be difficult to maintain editorial standards.
- Discussion on which new and traditional media can be used to keep civil society networks informed about platform activities. One possible outreach tool suggested is a mobile app, which would provide users with updates about the project and wider news related to the Sustainable Development Goals and Climate Commitments.

To drive these conversations forward and to make decisions on the project’s communication’s strategy, it was recommended that the facilitators of the working group not only consult its members, but also web developers about the latest online tools.

-Miscellaneous

If you are interested in getting involved in the other two working group’s please see details below for their first webinar meetings.

- The Working Group on Resourcing & Projects held its first meeting on January 26. To read the meeting notes click here.
- The Working Group on Governance and Membership is holding its first meeting on 4 February. To attend click here.