

**Action for Sustainable Development ([www.action4sd.org](http://www.action4sd.org))**  
**Platform Governance**  
**Proposal for Bogota Meeting**  
**29 April 2016**

Building on the series of discussions carried out since the World Social Forum in Tunis, March 2015, including in Addis Ababa at the Financing for Development Conference, in New York at the SDG Summit and in Paris at COP21; over Jan-March 2016 the Working Group on Governance & Membership has prepared a draft governance proposition, based on the following principles:

1. **Joint ownership.** Through coordination and facilitation, we will tap into, channel and amplify the energy that already exists, enable communication between groups and initiatives and provide the light-touch logistical support needed for sharing good practices, building joint messages and movement building, allowing us to be greater than the sum of our parts.
2. **Radical inclusivity.** We commit to work with all organisations, networks, groups, movements and individuals. We will work hard collectively as broader civil society and cooperate with different actors, such as trade unions, constituency groups, environmental justice and climate change organisations and wider social movements.
3. **Open and open-source.** All materials, communications products, logos and sharable content will be open to all to use but no one will be obligated to use them (subject to brand guidelines). Engagement in the platform will not depend on the use of these joint creative products, but the hope is that they will be compelling to different audiences and used widely across the platform and beyond to amplify our collective voice
4. **Transparent and accountable.** Where collective decisions need to be made, the process will be transparent, open and communicated through the governance channels to all participants.
5. **Respect for and Sensitivity to Context:** We recognize that every country and every society has a historical background that informs what they do and how they do it. We recognize that some are still exploring this agenda while others have existing structures and processes that have guided civil society and public engagement. As much as possible we will be sensitive to these contexts in our engagement, as long as such respect and sensitivity does not result in abrogation of our duty to all citizens and society.
6. **Do no harm:** We will ensure that none of our actions directly or indirectly cause harm to planet or people.
7. **Ethical considerations:** we take responsibility to conduct due diligence to ensure that the partnerships carried out under this platform are based on clear ethical guidelines.

The governance proposition utilises four governing structures, as outlined on the next page.

## Platform Structure



### Forum

Made up of all participating organisations. Main decision-making body through in-person Forums or online 'People Panel'.



### Facilitation Group

Global level. Work with Regional and National Coordinating Platforms, and Working Groups. Light touch steer and guidance.



### Coordination Team

Facilitating connections and flow of information, building and maintaining momentum at regional and global levels.



### Working Groups

Develop and deliver specific activities (e.g. issue-, constituency- or geography focused). All are open to all participating groups.

## 1) Forum (in-person or online)

### Purpose:

The Forum will be the main decision making body of the platform. It will be open to all participants to attend and will provide a space for inclusive dialogue. It will strengthen global civil society by facilitating exchange of best practice and linking regional/national organisations and initiatives. It will provide more than information sharing, providing a space with equality of access to deepen collaboration and solidarity between local, national and international civil society/platform participants.

The Forum will meet on a bi-annual basis. In between these meetings, the Coordination Team and the Facilitation Group will organise online Forums to keep platform members and supporters informed and ensure a collaborative strategy.

The collective decision-making process will be informed and shaped by national and regional dialogues. The outputs from these dialogues will inform the Facilitation Group and provide the key input to the

Forum. Each region shall commit to the creation of open transparent and inclusive mechanisms through which it shall prioritise its agenda and develop its own action plans.

Decisions at the Forum will be based on collective agreements coming from the national and regional level and from the Facilitation Group. The Forum shall seek to validate these decisions and where necessary seek consensus on issues cutting across regions.

**Membership:**

Membership will be open to all civil society organisations (registered and non-formalised) who subscribe to the core Mission Statement. Citizens can also subscribe to the Mission statement and engage in the platform as "Supporters". There will be a simple opt-in online procedure whereby all groups who subscribe will receive all information and regular communication about the platform. They will be encouraged to share views on social media and to engage via the assemblies as well as online People Panels.

Only members will be able to vote at the Forum.

The independence of other groups, coalitions, networks and movements engaging on the SDGs will be respected. This platform will be open to wider collaboration and engagement with other groups when this will add to the accomplishment of the mission.

**Remit:**

- Agree the overall strategic framework, narrative, key messages and main activities of the platform
- Agree plans for the platform's collective peak moments
- Review effectiveness of platform's communications and governance, based on the experience of participants
- Encourage engagement/provide initiation for new participants.
- Forum for updates from the Working Groups and national/regional bodies - opportunities to share best practice, identify links between national and regional groups, share learning from different groups & activities, and address issues arising from differing local, national, international approaches and/or contexts
- Agree on the working plan to be followed by the Facilitation Group, Working Groups and Coordination Team to coordinate and advise the platform between key meetings, as well as hold them to account on key deliverables.

**Practicalities – the Forum**

**Funding the Forum:**

To ensure the Forum is inclusive and open to all, the Facilitation Group and Coordination Team will work towards prioritising and securing funds for the Forum, ensuring participation from smaller/less resourced groups, online streaming/remote access for those that can't attend and translation. Attendance support should enable diverse representation from all world regions, types of actor (organisations, movements, activists, etc.) and sectors (development, climate, human rights, etc.), based on clear criteria established for the Forum invitations.

**Logistics:**

- For each Forum bi-annual meeting, the Coordination Team will work with the Facilitation Group to organise and ensure the planning and activity reflects the purpose, remit/objectives and radically inclusive ethos of the platform.
- The agenda and background documents will be compiled by the Facilitation Group with the support of Regional Coordinators and the Global Coordinator that will chair and organise calls.
- Wherever possible, bi-annual forums will be held in locations that are broadly accessible and have relatively low barriers to entry, particularly in terms of visa processes.
- Where possible, they will be rotated and held in regions where the platform is active
- Where possible, they will be linked to other large convening moments to help foster greater inclusion.
- Interpretation and translation of documents will be provided for French and Spanish. In terms of wider interpretation at meetings, the Facilitation Group and Coordination Team will agree on the most appropriate logistics, e.g. bridging languages, delegate twinning.
- The Facilitation Group and Coordination Team will identify partners, appropriate technology and best practice to ensure an inclusive virtual space for participation (e.g. by web streaming the Forums live, ensuring online systems for voting decisions, etc.)
- Where possible, groups might be mandated to represent other groups unable to attend.

**Practicalities – Online Forum**

When it won't be possible to organise an in-person Forum to take key decisions, the Global and Regional Coordinators will organise an online Forum to help inform the platform direction and hold it accountable to members.

## 2) Facilitation Group

### **Purpose:**

The Facilitation Group will perform a predominantly advisory role to the Global and Regional Coordinators, as well as the Working Groups to guide and inspire, providing light touch steer to connect initiatives and ensure strategies stay on track. It will liaise closely with partners at the regional level. It will be formed with 2 Members per region to ensure overall global balance & diversity, the 4 convening organisations plus 3 additional places for global constituency based groups in order to ensure balanced representation. The Facilitation Group will seek to facilitate and support the wider platform.

### **Remit:**

- Keep an overview of strategies to help ensure decisions agreed by the Assembly are implemented at regional and global levels.
- Advise/support the Coordination Team and Working Groups on their priorities and engagement strategies – identifying linkages and any conflicts, to help ensure coherence.
- Actively seek and identify opportunities for engagement in external events and partner projects to build the platform’s profile – including horizon scanning for future opportunities.
- Represent the platform in national, regional and international meetings and other fora related to the initiative.
- Support the Coordination Team in ensuring financial sustainability of the platform’s work.
- Sign off joint communications products and materials – those that are made for the use of the whole platform by all participants, not co-branded products - for immediate needs in-between Platform Assemblies (when timelines don’t allow for assembly decisions).

### **Composition & Selection of the Facilitation Group:**

The Global Facilitation Group will be made up of 25 members, formed of:

- 2 members per region (seeking balanced gender representation)
- 4 global networks which led the formation phase
- 7 constituency based representatives to ensure overall global balance & diversity

Election process:

Regional

- Selection process to take place at regional level, guided by existing regional platforms
- Open call for region, guided by nomination committee to shepherd the process in region to ensure engagement & nominations
- 2 seats- 1male/1 female. 1 seat to be representing the existing regional network; 1 seat to be open to key activists/wider informal network from the region
- If there are numerous candidates, there will be an election within the region
- The Coordination Team will select a nomination committee to support the election process in a neutral, open and transparent way.
- Nominations will be open and free, with basic details of candidates published for others to see.

#### Global thematic constituencies

- Besides the four convening partners, there will be 3 seats elected; they will be open to representatives of wider civil society.
- Candidates will be elected for a term of maximum 2 years (with the possibility of 1 renewal). If one of the representatives was to desist during his/her term, a separate election or nomination process (as appropriate) just for the replacement of this person will be set up for the selection of a representative for a full term.
- In order to ensure continuity and to avoid a situation where too many Facilitation Group representatives were to change at any given time, further modalities may be agreed as needed.
- The Global Facilitation Group will be accountable to the Assembly, and will report back on an annual basis.

### 3) Coordination Team

**Purpose:** To ensure the implementation of the work plan approved by the Assembly, facilitate flow of information and support participating organisations and other governance elements in the effective implementation/coordination of the platform's activities. Facilitate the platform at regional and global levels, and building and maintaining its momentum. The Coordination Team will include a light-touch global coordination and regional coordinators from all 7 regions.

**Remit:**

**Aim/Objectives:**

- Facilitate internal communications: help organise calls, maintain platform email lists, shared calendars and other possible tools; keep records of meetings (when they are happening, not minute taking); centralise and disseminate info; share creative ideas.
- Manage online presence to ensure information is up-to-date; advise and support Working Groups in the implementation of strategies
- Facilitate delivery against the strategy and ensure follow-up on decisions made at the assembly - chase and support participating organisations in the carrying out of agreed tasks
- Disseminate materials to all participating organisations at all levels – national, regional, global – where relevant
- Make sure the materials are translated at least into French and Spanish where possible
- Be primary point of contact (e.g. through online presence) and direct requests to relevant groups (e.g. Working Groups).
- Act as day-to-day representation of the platform and provide information for use by the Facilitation Group and Working Groups.
- Work closely with the Facilitation Group to deliver overall strategy.
- Coordinate joint fundraising activities

**Composition & Responsibilities:**

- The Coordination Team will be made up of the following members:
  - 1) A Global Coordinator for the platform
  - 2) A Network Officer to provide key logistical support to meetings and information sharing
  - 3) A Communications Officer to enable sharing of timely information and online engagement
  - 4) 7 Regional Coordinators
- Regional coordinators in every region: In order to ensure regular engagement at regional level, the broader team will be made up of a regional coordinator for each region<sup>1</sup>. Regional coordinators will work closely with the Global Coordinator and as part of the Coordination team, but will be hosted within an existing regional structure that is part of the platform to build from existing connections. There will be an open process for selection. The responsibilities of regional coordinators will include:

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<sup>1</sup> The 7 regions of the coalition are: Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), North America, Middle East and North Africa (MENA), Sub-Saharan Africa and the Pacific Islands.

1. **Network Engagement** - The regional coordinators will help maintain and build relationships with participating organisations and partners at the regional level:
  - Support network mapping and advocacy activities;
  - Reach out to all relevant regional actors including local and national CSOs/NGOs, women’s rights organisations, youth organisations, faith based groups, trade unions and social movements, etc.;
  - Engage national partners, platforms and other networks to form and coordinate national networks;
  - Identify strategic convening opportunities to engage the platform’s participants at the regional and global levels ; and
  - Engage participants, partners and other key stakeholders in the initiative’s programmes and activities.
  
2. **Platform Coordination** – The regional coordinators will support national networks in their region, and coordinate activities at the regional level:
  - Support the development of coordination mechanisms at national level, to encourage national platforms to be active during key moments of the initiative (the launch, the establishment of the national plans, setting up the monitoring structure of the implementation of the goals, etc.).
  - Develop and facilitate coordination mechanisms at the regional level through a regional working group that fosters the sharing of best practices and collaboration at the regional level. The regional coordinators will organise regional calls; organise regional meetings; plan, coordinate and implement regional actions; ensure that representatives from the region are active in global processes and working groups.
  - Ensure regular and effective communications with the Coordination team, participating organisations, working groups and other groups as required - including updates on the work at national level (system has to be developed); participation in coordination calls of the working groups; etc.
  - Ensure the flow of information to regional networks and national platforms and equally importantly to and from the global level

**Other practicalities:**

- Global Coordinator should ideally be located within a registered organisation, other Global Coordination staff could be at flexible locations/based within partner organisations and the team could coordinate virtually.
- Needs to build as much as possible on resources from already existing structures
- Needs people with devoted full time capacity
- Needs very clear accountability and communications lines for effective and transparent operation
- Needs very clear set of guidelines to work with other governance elements to ensure it’s not left to make decisions it’s not empowered to make

**In between assemblies:**

- Regular coordination calls between Coordination Team and Facilitation Group, possibility of having joint virtual tools to share information and track implementation of agreed strategies
- “On-demand” support from Facilitation Group on matters within scope/remit

- Regular updates to assembly needed as reporting mechanism as well as to drive ownership and engagement

**HR and recruitment:**

- Staffing dependent on available resources and potential overlap between envisaged roles (e.g. coordinator, communications, administration, etc.).
- Possibility of host organisation endorsing line management function for the coordinator position, top line work plan agreed by assembly and Facilitation Committee, detailed work plan developed between host organisation and coordinator. Accountability to host organisation, and to the assembly through a MoU between host organisation and assembly.
- Encourage secondments and staffing from already existing structures
- Possibility of working with volunteers on specific areas.
- Additional expert capacity can provide support on ad hoc basis (e.g. platforms or communications specialists).

The first recruitment to be made should be the Global Coordinator who will assist in the recruitment of the other roles. It will then be very important to work quickly on ensuring seed funding for activities at local, national, regional and global levels - e.g. seed funding for sub-grants to organise meetings to rally partners and plan local/national advocacy platforms to ensure all goals get met, sub-grants to set up the system needed to monitor the implementation of the goals, sub-grants to launch platforms or program activities for citizen engagement/participation in the implementation and/or monitoring of the goals, etc.

## 4) Working Groups

### **Purpose:**

- Working Groups will develop and deliver specific activities over the life of the initiative at the global, regional and national level, whether it is to deliver and coordinate on specific objectives of the platform (Monitoring & Accountability; Policy coordination; Public mobilisation; Innovative solutions etc.) or across more defined areas including expert areas (eg. Communications & outreach, Assembly logistics, etc.), thematic areas (e.g. particular platform themes related to the 2030 Agenda.), or any combination
- Working Groups will be action-orientated, project groups, with clear terms of reference
- The need for any Working Group will either be determined by the Assembly (possibly to reflect an agreed/established strategic priorities), the Facilitation Group and/or by participants of the initiative
- Working Groups will be inclusive, opt-in, consultative and work to the principles of the platform

### **Remit:**

#### **Responsibilities in terms of delivery:**

- To develop strategies and tactics for the fulfilment of the working group's objectives.
- To ensure that all outputs reflect the requirements, challenges and opportunities of joint activity across local, national, regional, global scales as appropriate. Including recognising time needed for participants to operationalise plans, recognising cultural sensitivities and different political contexts
- To ensure that their part of the platform has/maintains momentum, remains joined up (as relevant and appropriate), communicates appropriately and equitably across the Working Group and any of its component parts (e.g. if it has drawn on other Working Groups to deliver its task), and to ensure excellent communication and dissemination across the platform including with all other parts of the governance structure

#### **Responsibilities in terms of practice:**

In their practice Working Groups should be:

- Inclusive (opt-in)
- Consensus-seeking
- Consultative
- Representative
- Accessible (in terms of operation – timings for convening, mechanisms for convening, seek to build capacity, translation, and use accessible platforms for communications including appropriate digital/online platforms)
- Working Group 'facilitators' (*see under practicalities*) have a responsibility to try to ensure inclusiveness and actively reach out to other organisations to join.

### **Structure and practicalities:**

- All Working Groups will produce and work to a Terms of Reference which will also indicate the skills required for the particular Working Group.
- Those participants who want to set up Working Groups will inform and be supported by the Coordination team to recruit other platform participants who want to be part of that activity, also signposting them to Working Groups currently in existence who may be focusing on the same issues/areas.

- Working Groups will work on the opt-in principle for membership and for facilitation/joint facilitation of Working Groups.
- Working Groups will use varying convening formats to ensure accessibility.
- Working Groups will communicate with one another in order to share learning; this will be networked/facilitated by the Coordination Team, including a regular monthly joint call with all the Working Group facilitators.

**Group composition and engagement:**

- All working groups will aim to be representative of the variety of civil society organisations working on this theme/sector, with a broad reach across all geographic regions and have membership across both poverty and climate groups.
- The size of the group is unlimited but will be based on the ToR of each working group, based on their needs.

**Group facilitation:**

- Working Groups will be coordinated by ‘lead facilitators’.
- Lead facilitators should emerge (i.e. self-nominated) - the skills, enthusiasm and capacity should be harnessed and ‘co-facilitators’ should emerge. The lead facilitators should be representative of the diversity of organisations engaged in the initiative and/or working group.
- It is the responsibility of the lead facilitators to provide the space for a wide range of views/ideas/inputs, actively promote inclusivity and seek consensus, they are the ‘coordinators’ not the leads.
- It is the responsibility of the lead facilitators to ensure the Working Groups communicate effectively and to coordinate the activities: convene calls, circulate notes and content, be the contact point for queries, new members and topics to share.

**Review**

This governance structure and its elements shall be reviewed 1 year after the launch of the platform, in order to assess its effectiveness and to ensure it can be adapted if and as appropriate.