

ECOSOC General Debate
Statement by Jeffery Huffines, CIVICUS on behalf of the NGO Major Group
Thursday, 9 July 2015

Mr. President,

I would like to make three points reflecting upon the theme of this year's HLPF on "strengthening integration, implementation and review – the HLPF after 2015".

First, we wish to stress that the members of the NGO major group stand at the ready to partner with you, the Member States, the UN agencies, the Regional Commissions and all other stakeholders to vigorously implement the post 2015 development agenda should the final declaration to be adopted by Member States at the Summit in September reflect the high ambition demanded by civil society. We have heard loud and clear the message that the implementation of the post 2015 agenda begins with "national ownership," so we look forward to receiving your support, both financial and otherwise, to ensure that NGOs and civil society are equipped world wide to engage with their respective governments beginning in 2016 in the crafting of national development plans and national indicators best suited to the unique circumstances of their peoples, particularly those most marginalized and impoverished, at the national, subnational and local regions.

Second, recognizing that the implementation of the SDGs will require our indefatigable dedication year round that extends well beyond the 8 days allotted to the HLPF, last month at a two-day workshop, major groups and other stakeholders discussed how to ensure that the voices of non-state actors as identified in resolution 67/290, can be effectively brought into the HLPF and its preparatory processes in the ECOSOC and GA, including in the monitoring and review mechanisms to be established at all levels, and in the development of partnerships. Moreover, we looked at ways to strengthen the internal governance structures of the nine major groups and of other stakeholders in order to ensure broad and balanced participation and to promote openness, transparency and accountability so that we may hold ourselves equally accountable to the human rights standards that we demand of governments as duty-bearers to their citizens.

Third, we welcome the challenge of "strengthening integration" because it is within the synergies created by the inter-linkages between the SDGs here where the transformational potential of the Post-2015 Development Agenda truly lives. We have heard much talk about the need for the line ministries of governments to operate out of their silos in order to implement the SDGs at the domestic level, and so must NGOs and their donors across all sectors do the same. Looking forward, a broader range of civil society needs to be brought into global decision-making, and alliances formed to enable NGOs to work constructively with governments and intergovernmental institutions to achieve the SDGs. NGOs in partnership with other stakeholders need to build better connections between ground-level issues and the

global-level processes that impact on them, and nurture better south-south and north-south connections.

A new global report by CIVICUS finds that the rights of civil society were violated in almost half of the world's 193 countries in 2014. It is against this distressing backdrop that the enormous potential of the Post-2015 Development Agenda and the SDGs stand out as a tremendous beacon of light articulating the collective aspirations of us all for a better world. Thank you for the opportunity to address this august body.

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