

# **Guidelines on Citizens' Engagement for Development Management and Public Governance**



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DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC  
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## Acronyms

AAA	Accra Agenda for Action
CE	Citizen Engagement
CRC	Citizen Report Cards
CS	Civil Society
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DPADM/DESA	Division for Public Administration and Development Management (DPADM) of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA)
ECHR	European Convention on Human Rights
IAP2	International Association for Public Participation
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICT	Information and Communication Technology.
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NSA	Non-State Actor
UN	United Nations
DMB	Development Management Branch of the Division for Public Administration and Development Management (DPADM) of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA)
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights

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## Chapter I. Introduction

### *Why Is Citizen Engagement Important?*

Today there is a growing recognition that citizen engagement has an important role to play in the social and economic development of countries in general, and in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in particular<sup>1</sup>. This reflects a broader evolution of governance processes and structures whereby governments increasingly partner with and depend on the civil society and the private sector to achieve their policy goals. Concepts such as collaborative governance, shared governance and engaged governance reflect this development.

Citizen engagement is vital for the achievement of the MDGs with its potential to promote transparency and accountability of public administrations, enrich public policies with people's views, enhance people's ownership of public policies, and empower the poor and the most marginalized groups of people. Yet, there is a need to bridge the gap between the rhetorical commitments on citizen engagement and actual engagement processes leading to concrete results. Countries may lack meaningful citizen engagement processes because of lack of will, resources, and/or capacity.

Therefore, it is of key importance to strengthen the capacity of government officials, public administrators, citizens and civil society representatives to plan and implement successful and sustainable forms of citizen engagement and it is with this purpose in mind that these Guidelines have been prepared.

### *What Is the Purpose of These Guidelines?*

Citizen engagement is taking place all around the world, at local, national, regional and global levels. Initiatives of citizen engagement range from small grass-root projects to global intergovernmental initiatives. Citizen engagement can be seen as a worldwide driven by demand from citizens and communities.

As there is no one-size-fits-all model of citizen engagement, these guidelines do not offer any strict prescriptions. However, they intend to provide national government policymakers with resources and to serve as a concise and practical reference tool in helping to successfully plan and implement citizen engagement processes. Engaging citizens in a meaningful way requires effective planning, preparation and institutional capacity building in search for a more just society in which government policies reflect accurately citizens' needs and rights.

### *Who Are the Guidelines for?*

These Guidelines have been written with the intention of providing policy-makers at national level with practical guidance on how to responsibly and effectively engage citizens in their public policy decision and implementation processes. With equal importance, it is hoped that representatives from the civil society, academia, and the

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<sup>1</sup> List of the Millennium Development Goals is included in Annex I

private sector - and most importantly – interested citizens may find the Guidelines useful,

### *How Are the Guidelines Structured?*

The Guidelines can be approached in two alternative ways: (i) sequentially; in the order of the topics, chapter by chapter, or; (ii) by selecting only those topics or chapters, which are of special interest to the reader.

In Chapter 2 the concepts and definitions of citizen engagement are discussed, with a difference being made between citizen *engagement* and citizen *participation*, two complementary but essentially different approaches. In addition, an important distinction is made between genuine citizen engagement and what can be termed as ‘fake-dialogues’ or processes window-dressed as citizen engagement. The four key benefits of citizen engagement (strengthened accountability, transparency and prevention of corruption; consensus-building; collaboration between governments and citizens to achieve the MDGs; and enhanced well-being of citizens through improved services) are discussed in Chapter 3. The chapter also introduces the benefits and challenges of citizen engagement throughout the policy-development cycle, from agenda setting to monitoring and evaluation as well as discusses the risks of not promoting citizen engagement. Chapter 4 introduces some key conditions for effective citizen engagement as well as what should be avoided in the process. Putting citizen engagement from theory into practice is the topic of Chapter 5 which includes advice on developing a citizen engagement plan, identifying participants, the role of ICT in citizen engagement processes, as well as a practical check-list for implementation. The importances of monitoring and evaluation and tools for engaging citizens in these processes are the topics of Chapter 6. Roles and organizational forms of civil society and non-state actors and creating an enabling environment are discussed in Chapter 7. Chapter 8 recalls key international commitments towards citizen engagement and the MDGs. Finally, Chapter 9 lists sixteen guiding principles for effective citizen engagement.

A detailed Table of Contents can be found on pages 3 and 4, to serve as a quick and easy reference for those seeking information on a particular subject. The Annexes contain a Glossary on citizen engagement related terms, brief recall on the MDGs, as well as further reading on the topics.

## **Chapter 2. Citizen Engagement: Concepts and Definition**

Citizen *engagement* is premised on the principle that people should have -and want to have- a say in the decisions that affect their lives and to be able to increase their well-being through their own actions. More traditional approaches considered that *one-way* mechanisms, such as public hearings, citizen advisory councils, public comment periods and community boards could achieve this. In recent years it has become evident that citizens are increasingly frustrated with these mechanisms alone and that it is necessary to foster an active *two-way* dialogue between citizens and government to reinvigorate

current democratic practices and institutions and bring meaning to people’s participation<sup>2</sup>.

## 2.1 Citizen Engagement vs. Citizen Participation

Citizen engagement needs to be distinguished from more informal participatory approaches to policy development, also known as citizen participation, as the concept of engagement intentionally emphasizes **an active, intentional partnership between citizens and decision makers which is promoted and conducted by government authorities**, in contrast to actions taken by the sole initiative of citizens (see Table 1). Citizen engagement refers to the **public's involvement in determining how a society steers itself, makes decisions on major public policy issues and delivers programs for the benefit of citizens**. As will be further explained in these guidelines<sup>3</sup>, citizen engagement aims at **giving citizens spaces and tools to process and analyze information on policy alternatives and share with them a real stake in decision-making process and in monitoring and evaluation**. This core objective fits well in the “engage-collaborate-empower” continuum set forth in the public involvement spectrum developed by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2)<sup>4</sup>.

**Table 1: Core features of Citizen Engagement and Citizen Participation**

Citizen Engagement	Citizen Participation
Processes promoted and conducted by government authorities	Actions taken by the initiative of citizens
Formal structures and institutionalized (based on strategies and policies determined by governments or on normative principles and rules of procedure)	Informal
Aim is for governments to encourage specific actions from citizens to deliberate, assess and propose improvements to the government authorities on public service delivery, public policies and development.	Aim is for citizens to deliberate, assess and propose improvements – among themselves and with government authorities – on public service delivery, public policies and development programs

Participation and engagement of citizens are similar, yet essentially different, phenomena. Undoubtedly citizen participation is a fundamental element of guaranteeing that people’s voices and points of view are heard and acted upon in any country, and an intrinsic value in itself. However, informal participation is insufficient *alone* to give citizens a share in decision-making, to raise trust between citizens and government, and to achieve the level of inclusiveness and awareness of citizens’ views and opinions necessary to tackle most urgent issues such as

<sup>2</sup> Please refer to chapter 3 for further information on the rationale for Citizen Engagement.

<sup>3</sup> Please refer to chapter 3 (3.1. Benefits of Citizen Engagement)

<sup>4</sup> Lukensmeyer, Carolyn J. and Lars Hasselblad Torres. 2006. *Public Deliberation: A Manager’s Guide to Citizen Engagement*. The IBM Center for the Business of Government.

[www.businessofgovernment.org/pdfs/LukensmeyerReport.pdf](http://www.businessofgovernment.org/pdfs/LukensmeyerReport.pdf)

<http://www.iap2.org/>

reducing poverty and hunger, improving maternal health and ensuring environmental sustainability.

If adequately designed and implemented, a formal process for engagement can enrich the battery of juridico-political institutions for government to enact better public policies or programs and to deliver better public services. Citizen engagement consists of a commitment from government to nurture deeper levels of understanding among citizens about the issue at hand and potential solutions, and to provide them opportunities to apply that knowledge in service of policy and program development in a regular and enduring basis<sup>5</sup>.

Both participation and engagement are valuable and complementary phenomena, and care should be taken upon planning and implementing citizens engagement processes, so as not to undermine spontaneous participation, which is promising as a natural way for citizens to start innovations and improvements in public policies, programs or services. It is noted however, that the focus of these Guidelines is on citizen *engagement* processes.

## 2.2. What Is and What Is Not Citizen Engagement

It is important, notwithstanding that there is no one-size fits all formula for citizen engagement, to make a **clear-cut difference between well-intentioned engagement processes and, what can be referred to as ‘fake dialogues’**. ‘Fake dialogues’ may be processes that bring groups of citizens together for show or to appease public desire. They may also be processes convened by officials or institutions that could more accurately be called ‘information disclosure’, ‘consultations’ or, worse, ‘window dressing’ to give the false impression that authorities are consulting on policies that they have already decided upon<sup>6</sup> and/or when there is no genuine interest in infusing the decision with the opinions sought.

The following table outlines the characteristics that citizen engagement processes should embody and compares them to those of “fake processes”<sup>7</sup>:

**Table 2: Citizen Engagement vs. “False” Citizen Engagemnt**

Citizen Engagement*	“False” Citizen Engagement
• Involves citizens (individuals, not	• Engages exclusively the leaders of stakeholder

<sup>5</sup> In advanced systems for citizen engagement rules regulate what government authorities are obliged to do upon the inputs received through citizen engagement. While such rules don’t constraint government to act necessarily as recommended or proposed by engaged actors -as juridical, financial or technical reasons may prove that unfeasible or inconvenient-, the rules establish at a minimum the obligation for government to analyse in rigorous ways and within a time-bounded limit the inputs provided by citizens, and to subsequently make public the considerations by the public administration either to adopt those inputs fully, partially or not at all, stating the reasons within a reasonable period of time.

<sup>6</sup> Bettye Pruitt and Philip Thomas: Democratic Dialogue - A Handbook for Practitioners. 2007 UNDP, OAS, International IDEA

[http://www.undp.org/cpr/documents/we do/democratic%20 dialogue.pdf](http://www.undp.org/cpr/documents/we_do/democratic%20dialogue.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> Table from Amanda Sheedy: *Handbook on Citizen Engagement: Beyond Consultation*. Mar 2008 CPRN (Canadian Policy Research Networks). [http://www.cprn.org/documents/49583\\_EN.pdf](http://www.cprn.org/documents/49583_EN.pdf)

<p>representatives) in policy or program development, from agenda setting and planning to decision-making, implementation and review.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requires two way communication regarding policy or program change (interactive and iterative): between government and citizens; among citizens; and among citizens and civil society groups</li> <li>• Aims to share decision-making power and responsibility for decisions</li> <li>• Includes forums and processes through which citizens come to an opinion which is informed and responsible</li> <li>• Generates innovative ideas and active participation</li> <li>• Contributes to collective problem solving and prioritization (deliberation)</li> <li>• Requires that information and process be transparent</li> <li>• Depends on mutual respect between all participants</li> </ul>	<p>groups or representatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Constitutes participation in a program where no decision-making power is granted regarding the shape or course of the policy or program</li> <li>• Involves participants only in the last phase of policy development</li> <li>• Seeks approval for a pre-determined choice of alternatives</li> <li>• Intends to fulfill “public consultation obligations” without a genuine interest in infusing the decision with the opinions sought</li> <li>• Includes public opinion polls and many focus group exercises</li> </ul>
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*\*Please note that citizen engagement initiatives may embody some but not all of these characteristics.*

In summary, citizen engagement refers to **the public's involvement in determining how a society steers itself, makes decisions on major public policy issues and delivers programs for the benefit of citizens.** As such, citizen engagement is closely linked to the concept of social cohesion. This concept refers to the building of shared values, reducing disparities in wealth and income, and enabling people to have a sense that they are engaged in a common enterprise and face shared challenges as members of a community.

### Chapter 3. The Case for Citizen Engagement

As the previous chapter started to reflect upon, over the last decades there has been a **shift from a top-down model of government to horizontal and networked governance**, whereby the process of governing is ensured by public policy networks, including public, private and civil society actors<sup>8</sup>. The rationale for this shift lies in the understanding that better decisions are made when the affected stakeholder groups are actively involved and that no single stakeholder group has the answers to today’s complex policy problems. Governments are no longer expected to have all the answers internally but are increasingly called to play the role of coordinating and facilitating a **collective process of policy development**, where citizens and communities –who are demonstrating a far greater interest in public affairs- all have a role to play in creating effective public policies and related services, alongside public bodies.

Traditionally, citizen engagement in policymaking has only been considered in the context of **direct representation through the electoral process.** However, the

<sup>8</sup> Amanda Sheedy: Handbook on Citizen Engagement: Beyond Consultation. Mar 2008 CPRN (Canadian Policy Research Networks). [http://www.cprn.org/documents/49583\\_EN.pdf](http://www.cprn.org/documents/49583_EN.pdf)

changing role of government, coupled with the rising expectations on the part of citizens<sup>9</sup> are giving way **to a new dynamic order to address citizens' needs and re-energise public institutions**, which goes beyond traditional participatory approaches<sup>10</sup>, -whereby citizens are provided with information and/or feedback on alternatives or decisions made by governments- and emphasizes the sharing of power, information and mutual respect between government and citizens.

### 3.1. The Benefits of Citizen Engagement

On the basis of experience gained over the past years and results of policy analyses, it appears that the benefits of citizen engagement, which needs to be considered both as an intrinsic value and as an important avenue in the fight against poverty and the achievement of the MDGs, can be clustered around four major aspirations. These are:

*Governance: strengthening accountability & transparency and ensuring better control of corruption*

As public and media scrutiny over governmental action increases, public life standards rise and citizens become increasingly interested in having a say in public policies that impact their lives, citizen engagement can be a powerful democratic tool to promote accountability and transparency, as well as broader inquiry and reflection. Encouraging and enabling citizens to participate in ways that are meaningful to their lives gives them a greater sense of political efficacy, and has the potential to increase their confidence in political practices and structures<sup>11</sup>, thus leading to enhanced legitimacy<sup>12</sup> of the public establishment.

Citizen Report Cards (CRC) are used to pinpoint areas prone to corruption (e.g. in the provision of health, education and police services) and to devise measures to prevent corruption. CRC address themes such as access to services, quality and reliability, transparency in service provision such as disclosure of service quality standards and norms, costs incurred in using a service including 'hidden costs' such as bribes or private resources spent to compensate for poor service provision.  
<http://www.gaportal.org/tools/citizen-report-card>

Several successful examples of civic engagement in public accountability and transparency are emerging from countries applying participatory governance methodologies in a variety of fields. For example, citizen groups in several countries are progressively involved in budgeting and fiscal policy processes. A number of countries are also moving towards "people budgeting", which actively involves citizens in the budgeting process as well as citizen audits to ensure accountability of the implementation of the budgeted processes. Some countries now involve civil society organizations in public accountability processes including audits, particularly at the local level.

<sup>9</sup> Demands for change usually come from those who have found participation effective in enabling them to have a more powerful voice in the issues that affect their lives.

<sup>10</sup> Please refer to Chapter 2 (2.1. Citizen Engagement vs. Citizen Participation)

<sup>11</sup> Amanda Sheedy: Handbook on Citizen Engagement: Beyond Consultation. Mar 2008

CPRN (Canadian Policy Research Networks). [http://www.cprn.org/documents/49583\\_EN.pdf](http://www.cprn.org/documents/49583_EN.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> Experience shows that decisions that are perceived "as legitimate" by the public are generally those that take citizen's views into account

### *Consensus-building: Overcoming Polarization, reducing conflict, looking for common ground*

Through citizen engagement processes, relationships of trust can be built, as different stakeholders –who may have differing or even opposing views – come to understand each others positions and the reasons and motivations sustaining them. Citizen engagement processes also offer an effective tool to include minorities and engage minority voices’ in decision-making at all levels.

The City of Naga, in the Philippines, presents examples of innovative programme implementation and service delivery, by using participatory approaches to address the various dimensions of urban poverty. There are four key initiatives in the city’s evolving institutional experience in participatory governance. First, the Partners in Development Programme secures tenurial rights for the urban poor. Secondly, the Participatory Planning Initiatives strengthen local capacity on participatory approaches. Thirdly, the Reinventing the Local School Board initiative uses participatory approaches to influence a national agency to address a key local concern. Finally, Naga’s Millennium Development Goal-aligned local development plans seek to further institutionalize people’s participation in governance and development planning.

Through citizen engagement processes, relationships of trust can be built, as different stakeholders –who may have differing or even opposing views – come to understand each others positions and the reasons and motivations sustaining them. Citizen engagement processes also offer an effective tool to include minorities and engage minority voices’ in decision-making at all levels.

The National Economic and Social Council was established in Ireland 1973. The function of the Council is to analyze and report to the Taoiseach (Prime Minister) on strategic issues relating to the efficient development of the economy, the achievement of social justice and the development of a strategic framework for the conduct of relations and negotiation of agreements between the government and the social partners. The Council is chaired by the Secretary General of the Department of the Taoiseach and contains representatives of trade unions, employers, farmers' organizations, NGOs, key government departments and independent experts.  
<http://www.nesc.ie/>

Experience shows that giving citizens appropriate public spaces to come to reasoned collective decisions makes it much more likely that people will arrive to more public interest minded – less private-interest driven – responses to public policy problems. Engagement processes can help citizens reconcile their multiple interests and explore trade-offs.

In line with this approach, several countries are introducing structures of inclusive decision-making at the central or national level. In some cases, they have established multi-stakeholder bodies such as National Economic and Social Councils that incorporate civil society organizations, the private sector, trade unions and others. Others have institutionalised spaces for dialogue and engagement in the framework of their Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) processes. Other examples of institutionalised dialogue and engagement include Community Development Committees in Rwanda and integrated development planning in South Africa. In post-conflict situations, new models of participatory governance are also emerging to ensure conflict mitigation and inter-ethnic trust building.

### *Collaboration of governments, citizens and civil society organizations to make better policies to achieve the Millennium Development Goals*

As discussed in the introductory paragraph, current thinking has moved beyond the credo that one actor, or even one sector, can provide all the answers to today’s complex

policy problems. By tapping on the ample and assorted empirical knowledge and perspectives of citizens, generally in combination with other sources of knowledge, decisions can become more reflective of the real needs of communities. This is particularly relevant under conditions of increasing complexity and policy-interdependence, to derive a *common agenda of action* that is 'owned' by all stakeholders with a view to achieve the MDGs. Enhanced ownership by all stakeholders not only promotes accountability but also helps to ensure that basic services better reach those most in need, and that specific local needs are better reflected in policies.

Engagement processes can also contribute to enhancing citizens' sense of responsibility and ownership over these inclusive agendas, as well as to their progressive empowerment. Through citizen engagement processes, citizens can acquire skills, such as active listening, empathy, problem solving, and creative thinking, which can be put to good use as active community members<sup>13</sup>, thus enhancing social cohesion and fostering social capital.

### *Enhanced well-being of citizens through improved services*

Finally, citizen engagement bears the potential to improve the well being of citizens through improved basic services (e.g., health care, education) and superior management of public goods and common property resources (e.g., irrigation networks, environmental resources such as water bodies, forestry, etc).

Historically, these services and resources have been provided either by the government or proactively by the market and/or the community itself, when and where the government has been deficient. Whereas the reliance on government for the provision of basic goods and the management of common property resources has proved to be challenging and difficult, particularly in developing countries, the alternative of privatising these services and management of resources (by relying exclusively on the market) is neither satisfactory considering the "public good" nature of many of the services and resources and the need to ensure equity in their provision and/or management. Against this background, **citizen engagement has the potential to combine efficiency with equity.**

### **3.2. Citizen Engagement throughout the Public Policy Cycle**

Citizen engagement **can be implemented throughout the policy-forming cycle**, in its different phases depending on: (i) the benefits sought in engaging with citizens and; (ii) the specific objectives that are pursued. The table below provides an assessment of the objectives,

The Millennium Villages seek to end extreme poverty by working with the poorest of the poor, village by village throughout Africa, in partnership with governments and other committed stakeholders, providing affordable and science-based solutions to help people lift themselves out of extreme poverty. Some villages are currently experimenting with incorporating participatory structures in the design, implementation and delivery of services.

<http://www.unmillenniumproject.org/mv/index.htm>

<sup>13</sup> Amanda Sheedy: Handbook on Citizen Engagement: Beyond Consultation. Mar 2008 CPRN (Canadian Policy Research Networks). [http://www.cprn.org/documents/49583\\_EN.pdf](http://www.cprn.org/documents/49583_EN.pdf)

key benefits and challenges in each phase of the public policy cycle<sup>14</sup>.

**Table 3: Citizen Engagement throughout the public policy cycle**

<b>Step in the policy process</b>	<b>Rationale: What are the benefits sought?</b>	<b>Specific Objectives: What is the agency trying to establish?</b>	<b>What are the key challenges?</b>
<b>Agenda setting</b>	<p>Consensus-building: Overcoming Polarization, reducing conflict, looking for common ground</p> <p>Collaboration of governments, citizens and CSOs to make better policies to achieve the MDGs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Agree on the need for a policy reform</li> <li>▪ Define the problem to be addressed &amp; identify priorities to be tackled</li> <li>▪ Generate outcome statements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Offset risks of raising expectations of input automatically becoming policy</li> <li>▪ Ensure that diverse views are represented</li> </ul>
<b>Analysis and design</b>	<p>Consensus-building: Overcoming polarization, reducing conflict, looking for common ground</p> <p>Collaboration of governments, citizens and CSOs to make better policies to achieve the MDGs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Define key challenges with an issue</li> <li>▪ Align qualitative and quantitative evidence with appropriate policy alternatives</li> <li>▪ Evaluate alternative policy proposals</li> <li>▪ Develop a draft policy document</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Combine expert and experience-based knowledge cooperatively</li> <li>▪ Ensure that citizens whose lives will be impacted by the policy, are involved and voice their concerns and expectations</li> <li>▪ Ensure clarity around how input will influence policy and programme design</li> <li>▪ Develop background materials that ensure the adequate preparation of citizens involved.</li> </ul>
<b>Implementation of public programmes and services</b>	<p>Enhanced well-being of citizens through improved services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Establish programmes, guidelines and effective processes to deliver public services and/or manage public goods and common resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensure community capacity development over the policy development process</li> <li>▪ Communicate process and outcomes broadly</li> <li>▪ Verify alignment of results with expectations</li> </ul>
<b>Monitoring and evaluation</b>	<p>Governance: strengthening accountability and transparency and ensuring better control of corruption</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Monitor policy outcomes to determine whether the goals are met during implementation / values are respected /procedures complied with / etc</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop appropriate accountability mechanisms</li> <li>▪ Create information collection mechanisms</li> <li>▪ Connect information collection with feed-back cycle</li> </ul>

<sup>14</sup> For further information on CE strategies and tools, please consult chapter 5.

**Note:** adapted by the authors from Amanda Sheedy: Handbook on Citizen Engagement: Beyond Consultation. Mar 2008 CPRN (Canadian Policy Research Networks). [http://www.cprn.org/documents/49583\\_EN.pdf](http://www.cprn.org/documents/49583_EN.pdf)

### 3.3. Risks of Not Promoting Citizen Engagement and Alternatives When Conditions Are Not Met

Even though there are serious risks in poorly planned engagement processes<sup>15</sup>, experience shows there are also risks -and even costs- in not involving citizens in decisions, policies and plans that have an impact on their lives. Three main risks can be identified:

- (i) **No real communication** is established between policy developers and the community and as such the opinions and concerns of citizens are not heard, with the risk that they are not sufficiently taken on board;
- (ii) **Positions in the community may become polarized**, leaving no space for compromise and making productive discussions impossible;
- (iii) A sense of **public mistrust in politics may arise**, (even of threat among the community) thus undermining public policies' legitimacy and credibility

However, as the next chapter will address, a number of minimum conditions and factors need to be in place to support engagement. In case they are absent a number of possibilities to bring about the minimum conditions for dialogue to take place can be envisaged, as an intermediate step towards a culture of engagement. Here are some of them<sup>16</sup>:

**Table 4: Alternatives to citizen engagement that can help to bring about the minimum conditions for dialogue**

<b>Coalition-building</b>	One way of contributing to a relative balance of power is to promote coalition-building, in which dialogue can play a crucial role. According to conflict experts, this is the primary mechanism through which disempowered parties can develop their power base and thereby better defend their interest.
<b>Intra-group dialogue</b>	When sectors or groups are simply not ready to participate in a dialogue, it may be possible and wise to promote dialogue internally in order to help them reach the point of readiness. For instance, a dialogue can be initiated involving only civil society actors, with a view to overcome fragmentation and to build a common position before they engage with the government.
<b>Partial dialogue</b>	When not all key stakeholders are willing to participate, it is not always necessary to wait until everyone is ready. Another strategy is to proceed with a partial group and build on progress made in that group so as to progressively draw others into the process.
<b>Bilateral</b>	Sometimes a practitioner can draw resistant parties into the dialogue by

<sup>15</sup> See Chapter 4 for an enumeration and description of the required conditions for Effective CE.

<sup>16</sup> Adapted from Bettye Pruitt and Philip Thomas: Democratic Dialogue - A Handbook for Practitioners. 2007. UNDP, OAS, International IDEA [http://www.undp.org/cpr/documents/we\\_do/democratic%20dialogue.pdf](http://www.undp.org/cpr/documents/we_do/democratic%20dialogue.pdf)

<b>conversations</b>	speaking individually to people who refuse to talk to each other, thereby starting a dialogue by playing an intermediary role.
<b>Advocacy</b>	It might be possible to bring the pressure of public opinion, or world opinion, to bear on reluctant parties by raising awareness about the challenge that needs to be addressed and the opportunity for dialogue on the issues.

## Chapter 4. Key Conditions for Effective Citizen Engagement

Concerns and scepticism regarding citizen engagement should not be ignored<sup>17</sup>. Despite proven benefits<sup>18</sup>, some critical voices question the cost-effectiveness of citizen engagement, because of budgetary and time concerns. Others worry about citizens groups (particularly elite groups<sup>19</sup>) taking over the delicate policy process or about raising expectations beyond reasonable limits. Whereas these and other concerns are legitimate, many can be addressed with political commitment, strong leadership, adequate planning and objective setting, transparent communication with participants and enough flexibility to adjust the process to emerging circumstances<sup>20</sup>, among others.

Hence, it is necessary to take a broad overview of the **conditions necessary for effective engagement, based on both conceptual and empirical foundations**<sup>21</sup>:

### 4.1. Pre-requisites of effective citizen engagement

- (i) **Political will and involvement of political decision-makers in the process:** Leadership and strong commitment to information, consultation, active participation, and accountability in policy-making is needed at all levels, from politicians and senior managers to public officials. Decision-makers need to be actively involved in the process, to be able to feed citizens' inputs into the policy-making process.
- (ii) **The power of influence of actors involved in the process and even of those not involved:** Engagement is effective when it yields greater influence for ordinary

<sup>17</sup> Amanda Sheedy: Handbook on Citizen Engagement: Beyond Consultation. Mar 2008 CPRN (Canadian Policy Research Networks). [http://www.cprn.org/documents/49583\\_EN.pdf](http://www.cprn.org/documents/49583_EN.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> Citizen engagement benefits are outlined in the preceding chapter

<sup>19</sup> In many contexts, inequalities and power asymmetries are embedded into strong local patriarchies and a serious risk of "elite capture" arises. This problem is particularly serious when officials and institutions rush and jump over the empowerment phase when embracing participatory approaches. When the required time is not spent to ensure that the most vulnerable groups acquire real bargaining power and the required capacity to engage, 'ownership' by them is most likely to remain an elusive objective, and power relationships may be open to abuse.

<sup>20</sup> Chapter 8 reflects upon the global guiding Principles for effective Citizen Engagement.

<sup>21</sup> Even though, different scholars and practitioners may have elaborated lists of conditions that differ from the ones outlined here, most lists capture the essence of what the following conditions convey. A comprehensive example, used as a source of inspiration for the conditions outlined in this chapter, can be found in Marc Gramberger: Citizens as Partners. Information, Consultation and Public Participation in Policy-Making. 2001. OECD Publishing.

[http://www.ecnl.org/dindocuments/214\\_OECD\\_Engaging%20Citizens%20in%20Policy-Making.pdf](http://www.ecnl.org/dindocuments/214_OECD_Engaging%20Citizens%20in%20Policy-Making.pdf)

people<sup>22</sup>, especially the poor and socially excluded<sup>23</sup>, over public agents. Engagement must not only serve to reveal the preferences of citizens but also to enable those preferences shape policy outcomes. To this end, trust is essential, as it allows managing, organizing and delegating implementation tasks for the actions that have been jointly decided and makes partnerships an educational experience<sup>24</sup>. Finally, engagement needs to be seen as a core element, embedded in the policy process, not as an occasional, ad-hoc or add-on element.

- (iii) **Inclusiveness, equality, non-discrimination and diversity of the actors represented<sup>25</sup>**: This is perhaps the most fundamental principle of citizen engagement. It expresses the underlying assumption that all citizens who are part of a problem situation, need to participate, on an equal basis, to represent their different viewpoints and interests. It also implies that powerful groups, with vested interests, cannot override the preferences of the majority and hence, there may be a need for some sort of “countervailing power”, to reduce, and perhaps even neutralize, any unfair advantages of the powerful actors. Affirmative action and special measures, including capacity development, may also be necessary to reach out into the sections of the community (particularly marginalised groups) that risk being excluded because of lack of knowledge and/or access to information, and physical and cultural distances to the decision-making centres. They can be an effective means to mitigate potential power imbalances and ensure that these groups exercise effective equal enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights.
- (iv) **A right-based approach towards engagement**: The necessary countervailing power cannot be created without the fulfilment of civil and political rights such as freedom of speech and information, freedom of association, and equal access to justice and information, among others. Some research goes even further to argue that the poor must be ensured a certain minimum degree of economic security before they can be expected to engage in activities geared to the creation of countervailing power. Hence, citizens’ rights to access information, provide feedback, be consulted and actively participate in policy-making<sup>26</sup> are essential and must be firmly grounded in national law and policy. Governments’ obligations to citizens when executing their rights must also be clearly stated. Independent institutions for oversight, or their equivalent, are essential to enforcing these rights.
- (v) **Voluntary basis of engagement**: Citizens may be encouraged to be involved, and

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<sup>22</sup> A person is willing to participate and learn to the extent that by doing so, he/she gets results. Thus, the ability to influence on the problem solving, encourages people to get involved and be innovative;

<sup>23</sup> Please refer to chapter 2 (2.3 Who to engage with).

<sup>24</sup> Oyhanarte, Marta and others. *Frutos de la Democracia*. UNDP. 2009. Only available in Spanish at [http://www.auditoriaciudadana.com.ar/informes/frutos\\_democracia.pdf](http://www.auditoriaciudadana.com.ar/informes/frutos_democracia.pdf)

<sup>25</sup> Please refer to chapter 2 (2.3 Who to engage with).

<sup>26</sup> In this sense, full enjoyment of the civil and political rights enshrined in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights like the right to participate in the conduction of public affairs (Art. 25), the right to vote and to be elected (Art. 25), the right to freedom of expression (Art. 19), right to access information (Art. 19), the right to freedom of assembly (Art. 21), and association (Art. 22) among others, are absolutely crucial in the decision-making processes.

even compensated for involvement (for the lost day of work, etc.), but effective and real citizen engagement gives all people the free choice of whether to participate or not. Hence, engagement cannot be compulsory or imposed on citizens. To enable the active involvement of all those who wish to do so, the socio-cultural barriers to citizen engagement should be addressed.

- (vi) **Clarity of the process, objectives, expected outcomes, roles and rules:** The objectives, expected outcomes, as well as the limits to engagement, need to be well defined and communicated from the outset, so that all stakeholders have the same understanding of the scope of the process. The respective roles and responsibilities of the citizens (in providing information and inputs) and government (in making decisions for which they are accountable) must also be clear to all parties, as well as the rules of the process. Otherwise, engagement processes will generate dissatisfaction and frustration.
- (vii) **Commitment towards transparency and accountability throughout the process:** Governments have an obligation to account for the use they make of citizens' inputs received throughout the engagement process. Without adequate procedures and institutions for holding the "direct" decision-makers accountable for their actions and inactions, citizens cannot ensure that decisions agreed upon through participatory processes will be effectively endorsed and implemented.
- (viii) **Resources and capacity:** Adequate human, technical and financial resources are needed if citizen engagement is to be effective. On the one hand, government officials must have access to appropriate skills, guidance and training as well as an organizational culture that supports the efforts. On the other hand citizens need to have the capacity to effectively engage (understanding of the issues at hand, etc).

In conclusion, the conditions for effective involvement through which ordinary citizens can influence outcomes of decision-making processes include, on the one hand, means and systems that create an empowered citizenry, assured of their rights and, on the other hand, mechanisms oriented towards the institutionalisation of a culture of engagement on the side of the public institutions. Transparency and accountability are also an imperative in creating the confidence that citizens' inputs will impact the decision making process.

## 4.2. Challenges of Citizen Engagement

Effective citizen engagement also raises a number of outstanding challenges, which need to be duly acknowledged and dealt with. These are<sup>27</sup>:

- (i) **Engagement takes time while there is pressure for instant solutions,** generating tensions between legitimacy (which is usually dependant on the

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<sup>27</sup> Adapted from Bettye Pruitt and Philip Thomas: Democratic Dialogue - A Handbook for Practitioners. 2007. UNDP, OAS, International IDEA

[http://www.undp.org/cpr/documents/we do/democratic%20 dialogue.pdf](http://www.undp.org/cpr/documents/we_do/democratic%20dialogue.pdf)

consistency of the process) and the need (sometimes even a sense of urgency) to deliver timely and tangible results, which will be sustained over time;

- (ii) **Dealing with complexity:** Complex issues require responses that take account of their full complexity and that involve representatives from all groups affected by the issue. Only then can assessments and plans of action integrate all the perspectives and roles that make the situation what it is;
- (iii) **Coordinated meaning-making:** Inclusiveness, albeit being essential, poses significant challenges. Sometimes people embark on engagement processes with different conceptual frameworks (e.g. giving different interpretations to words, actions and events). The more conceptual frameworks differ, the more the interpretations are likely to be at odds at least around issues of common interest. Only through coordinated meaning-making will there be a foundation for coordinated action;
- (iv) **Making change and innovation happen:** To produce innovation and change, citizen engagement must: (i) empower participants to question the status quo, and challenge prevailing assumptions; (ii) frame alternative choices and negotiate the trade-offs that are necessary in order to proceed and; (iii) create the mutual understanding and common purpose that enable societal groups to develop a sense of mutual responsibility for the consequences of their decisions;
- (v) **Avoiding the risk of citizen engagement fatigue:** When disillusioned by engagement processes with negligible impact on either the policies at stake or established power relationships, citizens may question the degree of commitment of public institutions to change and loose interest in future engagement processes.

In conclusion, the reader is reminded that just as there is no one-size fits all models of citizen engagement, also the challenges vary and all citizen engagement processes need to address these contextual challenges to be successful and sustainable.

### 4.3. What Needs to Be Avoided in the Process

**Clearly, bad engagement practice can be worse than no practice**<sup>28</sup>. “Quick-fixes” and poor engagement practice can accentuate mistrust, results in a waste of citizens’ time and public funds and can seriously undermine any future attempt to convene a new process of citizen engagement.

More than anything else, in addition to paying due attention to the conditions and challenges outlined, public officials engaging with citizens need **to avoid the so-called “rhetoric/practice” gap**, which arises when: (i) intentions are not matched by action to open up real spaces for dialogue and a willingness to actually change policies as a result of the process; (ii) citizens realise that their opinion is sought only after decision have already been made or: (iii) over-enthusiastic expectations cannot be met.

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<sup>28</sup> People & Participation. How to put citizens at the heart of decision-making. Involve. <http://www.involve.org.uk/assets/Uploads/People-and-Participation.pdf>

In conclusion, as experience around the world shows, **it is more important to aim for better and more meaningful engagement rather than focus on the quantity.** Better engagement requires more in-depth understanding of the complexities and contradictions of working with people to change the ways decisions are made and implemented<sup>29</sup>.

## Chapter 5. Putting Citizen Engagement into Practice

Once the rationale (objectives and purpose) for engaging citizens (as described in chapter 3) is clearly spelled out, and there is certitude that the necessary conditions or pre-requisites are met to start such a process (as outlined in chapter 4); it is time to move to the *how to do it* or design stage. It is important to keep in mind that the *how* cannot be addressed unless the *why* is well understood and agreed-upon. In other words, the design of the engagement process is all about planning how the objectives and purpose of engaging citizens shall be achieved, including the methods to be promoted and the required institutional frameworks.

In addition to the methods –or tools–, other relevant issues need also to be considered when addressing the design phase, from the approach that will be used to the need for an engagement plan, the choice of participants to invite, the use of ICTs, among others.

### 5.1 Main Approaches to Citizen Engagement

There are a number of approaches to citizen engagement, and most of them distinguish different levels of citizen involvement. As shown in Table 7, each level represents different degrees of power sharing with citizens. Whereas each level can play a key role in the policy development process, it is the actual *engagement of citizens* (placed at the involve-collaborate-empower end of the spectrum as described in chapter 2), which offers the opportunity for an active, intentional partnership between citizens and decision-makers.

It is however important to recall that working at the *involve-collaborate-empower* end of the spectrum needs a real commitment by the government to do everything possible to implement what citizens decide. It thus requires a genuine dedication to listening to, analyzing with transparency and reporting on what citizens have to say with the purpose of having their input influence and inform the outcomes.

**Table 4: IAP2 Public participation spectrum**

INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
<b>Public Participation Goal</b>				
Provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the	Obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions	Work directly with the public throughout the policy process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are	Partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution	Place final decision-making authority in the hands of citizens

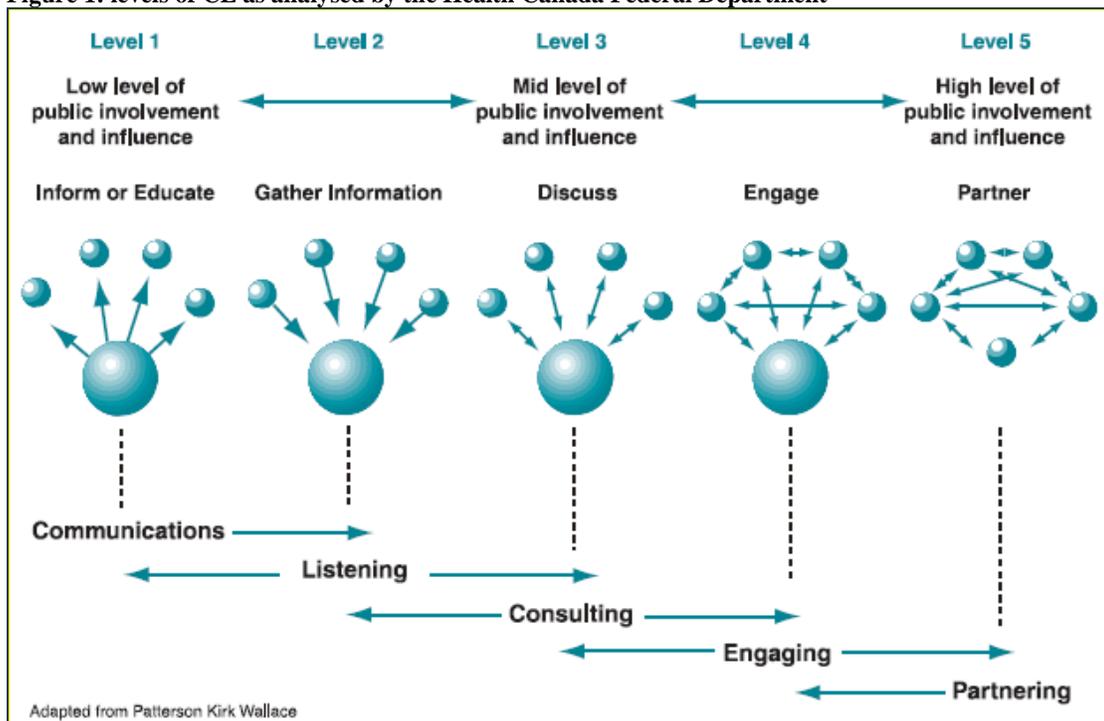
<sup>29</sup> ibis

problem, alternatives and opportunities and/or solutions		consistently understood and considered		
<b>Promise to the Public</b>				
We will keep you informed	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision	We will look to you for direct advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible	We will implement what you decide

Source: International Association for Public Participation. [www.iap2.org](http://www.iap2.org)

An alternative approach is that elaborated by the Health Canada Federal Department presented below. In this case, citizen engagement level is reached at levels 4 (engaging) and 5 (partnering).

**Figure 1: levels of CE as analysed by the Health Canada Federal Department**



Source: Health Canada Policy Toolkit for Public Involvement in Decision Making<sup>30</sup>.

<sup>30</sup> Health Canada: [http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ahc-asc/alt\\_formats/pacrb-dgapcr/pdf/public-consult/2000decision-eng.pdf](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ahc-asc/alt_formats/pacrb-dgapcr/pdf/public-consult/2000decision-eng.pdf)

There are other approaches to citizen engagement but the essential element to bear in mind is the **capacity of governments to generate and sustain engagement processes** that consider citizens as partners in the public policy cycle.

## 5.2 The Importance of Developing a Citizen Engagement Plan

Before undertaking any action to strengthen government-citizen relations, decision-makers have to **design a citizen engagement plan**. Goals set at the beginning will inform the remainder of the planning decisions. These goals may evolve as the citizen engagement initiative progresses, but without defining the goals at the beginning of process it will be difficult to keep the process focused..

It is also important to place this initiative within an organizational/ departmental framework, as well as a broader political and societal context. Taking the time to sit with team members and decide on the *what's, why's, who's* and *how's*<sup>31</sup> will help. Not addressing these questions beforehand could be counterproductive.

- *What is the contribution to wider aims of the government?*
- *What to achieve with the process?*
- *Why undertake the process now?*
- *Who to engage in the process?*
- *How to best achieve it?*
- *How to know if the process has been successful?*

Planning is an investment that will bear fruit at all stages. It entails clarifying the objectives you want to reach, the public you want to address, and the resources at your disposal, as well as processes and institutional frameworks required. It provides the basis for selecting the mix of tools and implementing the activities. Setting up evaluation from the outset gives the chance to know if and how far the activities were successful, and to improve planning and action for the future<sup>32</sup>. Always keep in mind that **objectives and targeted audience are the most important elements – in the end, activities need to follow objectives, not the other way round**<sup>33</sup>.

The table below puts forward some useful questions to guide the planning stage of a citizen engagement process, from developing internal capacity to evaluation:

**Table 5: Key issues at the citizen engagement planning stage**

Issue to face	Guiding questions
<b>Developing internal capacity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do the members of the team understand the case of citizen engagement?</li> <li>• How open are other staff and decision-makers to citizen input?</li> <li>• Is internal training required?</li> </ul>
<b>Framing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have materials been pre-tested on the target populations?</li> <li>• Is the issue dealt with objectively and in an accessible way?</li> </ul>

<sup>31</sup> Amanda Sheedy: *Handbook on Citizen Engagement: Beyond Consultation*. Mar 2008 CPRN (Canadian Policy Research Networks). [http://www.cprn.org/documents/49583\\_EN.pdf](http://www.cprn.org/documents/49583_EN.pdf)

<sup>32</sup> Please refer to chapter 6 for further information on monitoring and evaluation

<sup>33</sup> Marc Gramberger: *Citizens as Partners. Information, Consultation and Public Participation in Policy-Making*, p. 40-41.2001. OECD Publishing. [http://www.ecnl.org/dindocuments/214\\_OECD\\_Engaging%20Citizens%20in%20Policy-Making.pdf](http://www.ecnl.org/dindocuments/214_OECD_Engaging%20Citizens%20in%20Policy-Making.pdf)

<b>Selection of participants</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the scale of the whole process?</li> <li>• What are the goals?</li> <li>• What population(s) is (are) to be reached?</li> </ul>
<b>Selecting the tools</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What will the timeline and budget allow for?</li> <li>• What methods will clearly match goals?</li> <li>• Do goals include having citizens generate new ideas and/or having them make deliberate choices about policy or program directions?</li> <li>• What methods match the agency vision/mission/goals?</li> <li>• Is the agency committed to having the citizen input influence and inform the outcome?</li> <li>• Is the agency able to accept or integrate the decisions or recommendations that emerge from the process?</li> </ul>
<b>Information to provide participants</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who will write the material and for what audience (taking into consideration literacy levels of the target population)?</li> <li>• What information will be provided to participants and how will framing considerations be implemented in this material?</li> <li>• How will information be provided to participants (documents sent in mail, website, etc.)?</li> <li>• Does the material need to be translated, and if so, into what language(s)?</li> </ul>
<b>Logistics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have all topics been considered: timing and timeframe; space for the event; accessibility; neutrality; childcare; etc.?</li> </ul>
<b>Facilitation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is it important to have a facilitator that is well-informed on the subject matter?</li> <li>• How important is the perception of neutrality regarding the facilitator?</li> <li>• If external facilitators are to be hired, how will they be involved in the planning and design of the citizen engagement process?</li> </ul>
<b>Online citizen engagement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there adequate internal capacity for online presence, or does this need to be built or provided externally?</li> <li>• What are the reasons for using online citizen engagement?</li> <li>• What will it add to the overall process?</li> <li>• How will the limitations of the online environment be overcome?</li> </ul>
<b>Reporting to decision-makers and participants</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In what format will participants receive feedback (letter, pamphlet, booklet, etc.)?</li> <li>• How will feedback be distributed (email, website, mail, meeting, etc.)?</li> <li>• Based on the evaluation or expressed expectations, what might be some key information to include?</li> <li>• Who will write the feedback, and for what audience (taking literacy levels and language into account)?</li> <li>• In circumstances where the policy or program outcome will not be known for some time, how best to report back?</li> </ul>
<b>Evaluation and analysis<sup>34</sup></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has evaluation been adequately planned for, allowing time and resources for the evaluation process?</li> <li>• How will the event be recorded?</li> <li>• How will consent be obtained from participants?</li> <li>• What will be analyzed based on the process goals (process, outcomes, impact, outputs, etc.)?</li> <li>• What will be measured /observed?</li> <li>• How will participants (citizens, politicians, staff, etc.) be involved in the evaluation of the process/outcomes?</li> <li>• What data, qualitative and/or quantitative, will capture lessons learned from the process?</li> <li>• How will project outcomes be recorded based on data needs? Is there the need to obtain consensus from participants?</li> <li>• Can the evaluation be designed to provide ongoing learning throughout the process and determine when goals are met?</li> </ul>

<sup>34</sup> Please refer to Chapter 6 for further information on citizen engagement Monitoring and Evaluation

Elaborated by the authors from Amanda Sheedy: *Handbook on Citizen Engagement: Beyond Consultation*. Mar 2008.

### 5.3 Who to Engage with

Experience shows that **identifying the right participants is one of the most fundamental questions in citizen engagement**, to ensure that the process is effective, and beyond the effectiveness question, to create legitimacy and credibility for the whole process.

The important actors in an effective citizen engagement process may include institutions, interest groups, academics, local or national NGOs, trade unions, etc., as well as individuals, with particular technical or personal expertise<sup>35</sup>. A thorough analysis deals not only with the major groups and institutions but also with the diversity that may exist within them— for example, within the ‘civil society’ or ‘the private sector’. Hence there is a need to carefully map out the actors that have an interest and/or influence on the topic.

To that end, the suggestion is to: (i) contact potential internal allies (other government agencies and other levels of government at the subnational and local levels) and external allies (international organizations, development cooperation agencies, foreign governments); (ii) carefully plan the call for citizens, community organizations, private sector, trade unions, academics and civil servants and officials directly involved in the topic.

It is also fundamental to make the selection process as transparent as possible and to always have in mind the ‘*who is missing*’ question; in order not to leave any relevant actor out of the citizen engagement plan and go beyond the “usual suspects”<sup>36</sup>. As experience shows, plurality of voices enriches the process and contributes to its legitimacy<sup>37</sup>.

**Table 6: Relevant questions when addressing the whom to invite issue.**

<b>Some questions to be considered to make ensure that no relevant actors are excluded</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ What sectors of society have an interest in the issue that will be debated? Are those sectors represented in any organizations/bodies that can be used as interlocutors?</li><li>▪ What sectors of society will be impacted by the decisions (positively and negatively)? Are these the same as those with an interest? Are they organized?</li><li>▪ Who has influence in the community/area/etc with regards to the issues that will be debated?</li><li>▪ Who are the actors that have a potential to obstruct the decision if not involved?</li><li>▪ Who has been involved in the past? Who has not been involved in the past, but should be, and what were the reasons?</li></ul>

Last but not least, it is important to be aware of **engaging specific population groups like the poor, young, women, indigenous, persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups**, who are often excluded from these processes because of lack of

<sup>35</sup> Please refer to Chapter 7 (Organized and effective participation of Non-State Actors in Public Development Affairs)

<sup>36</sup> Please refer to chapter 4 (4.1. Pre-requisites of effective Citizen Engagement; about Inclusiveness, equality, non-discrimination and diversity of the actors represented)

<sup>37</sup> Please refer to Chapter 7 (Organized and effective participation of Non-State Actors in Public Development Affairs)

knowledge and/or access to information, and physical and cultural distances to the decision-making centres<sup>38</sup>.

**Table 7: Types of barriers that discourage effective citizen engagement**

Barriers to effective citizen engagement
<p>The following barriers can lead to low (or non existent) citizen engagement of specific groups or whole populations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Subjective barriers</b>, constituted by the lack of knowledge (which can be remedied with information) and lack of assertiveness of vulnerable groups (which reveals the need to implement educational interventions).</li> <li>2. <b>Formal barriers</b>, when standards and / or resolutions that allow everyone access to the same rights are missing or are not met.</li> <li>3. <b>Political barriers</b>, when there <i>is</i> a law but financial resources and / or human resources to make it operative are insufficient.</li> <li>4. <b>Legal barriers</b>, when despite the existence of the law and the resources, mechanisms for access to justice to allow the enforcement of rights do not exist or are deficient.</li> </ol>

Many believe that good design and facilitation can help to address the challenges of ensuring the engagement of the vulnerable groups. Others consider that this problem is best addressed, not by skillful moderation, but by organizing separate discussions for the vulnerable groups. Different cultural groups respond to different strategies of engagement. In some cases, what is most important is to offer tangible assistance, such as food, day care, or financial incentives (e.g. to compensate missed income due to citizen engagement activities). It is also important to remember that who issues the invitation can make a difference in the effectiveness of recruitment and the breadth of participation.

## 5.4 Available Tools for Enhancing Citizen Engagement throughout the Public Policy Cycle

It goes without saying that **selecting the tools** is an important step at the planning stage. Several factors need to be considered to make the right choice:

- **Goals:** If the purpose is to raise public awareness and knowledge, tools concentrating on information are adequate. If the objective is to receive feedback from citizens, selecting consultation tools will make sense. **If the desired effect is to engage citizens in developing new policy options, tools for active participation need to be considered.**
- **Targeted audience:** Tools need to be selected and adapted to fit the targeted audience. To give an example: if the goal is to reach directly all citizens in the country, it is advisable to use tools that present information in a way that is understandable to all.
- **Available resources:** Without adequate resources, tools cannot be used. The selected tools need to fit in with what staff and technical equipment is available, and

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<sup>38</sup> Please refer to chapter 4 (4.1. Pre-requisites of effective Citizen Engagement; about Inclusiveness, equality, non-discrimination and diversity of the actors represented)

with what government can and is willing to invest. Determining what the agency is capable of is essential when choosing the strategy and the tools.

- **Public Policy Step:** not every tool is appropriate at every stage of the public policy cycle (from agenda setting to monitoring and evaluation).

The table below introduces a selection of citizen engagement tools, from 21<sup>st</sup> Century Town Meetings to opinion polls and informal reviews, connecting them with the appropriate step in the public policy cycle. The strengths and limitations of each tool are elaborated in more detail in tables 10 to 18.

**Table 8: Citizen engagement tools throughout the public policy cycle**<sup>39</sup>

Step in the public policy cycle	Which engagement tools might work best at this step?	What are the strong points of these tools?
<b>Agenda setting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Deliberative poll</li> <li>▪ Dialogue processes</li> <li>▪ Citizen fora</li> <li>▪ 21st Century Town Meeting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Uses a random scientific sample</li> <li>▪ Clarifies values</li> <li>▪ Quantifies opinion shifts</li> <li>▪ Generates media attention</li> </ul>
<b>Analysis and design</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Consensus conferences</li> <li>▪ Citizens juries</li> <li>▪ Study circles</li> <li>▪ Citizen fora</li> <li>▪ Dialogue processes</li> <li>▪ 21st Century Town Meeting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Cost-effective</li> <li>▪ Uses a random scientific sample</li> <li>▪ Allows for an in-depth, technical issues exploration</li> <li>▪ Incorporates expert views</li> <li>▪ Avoids media spotlight</li> <li>▪ Engages large segments of the population</li> <li>▪ Cultivates shared agreement</li> <li>▪ Uncovers public priorities</li> <li>▪ Generates media visibility</li> </ul>
<b>Implementation of public programs and services delivery</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Public hearings</li> <li>▪ Mainstream media</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Cost-effective</li> <li>▪ Reaches large numbers of citizens</li> <li>▪ Reinforces leadership role of public officials and experts</li> </ul>
<b>Monitoring and evaluation</b> <sup>40</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Informal reviews</li> <li>▪ Public opinion polls</li> <li>▪ Participant surveys</li> <li>▪ Reviews</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Engages the public in follow-up</li> <li>▪ Builds new skills</li> <li>▪ Engages citizens in their community</li> <li>▪ Distributes information collection widely</li> </ul>

Adapted by the authors from Amanda Sheedy: *Handbook on Citizen Engagement: Beyond Consultation*. March 2008.

When matching tools with objectives, targeted audience, available resources and policy-cycle stage, government officials may find that one tool is not enough to create the necessary level of contact with citizens and to achieve the planned objectives and that a mix of tools is more convenient. What is important to bear in mind here, notwithstanding the number of tools, is that **the choice of tools has to be made on the basis of defined objectives, targeted audience and resources – not vice versa**. Also,

<sup>39</sup> Please refer back to Table 6: Citizen Engagement throughout the public policy cycle, for further information of each one of the phases, in terms of objectives and challenges.

<sup>40</sup> For further information consult chapter 6, namely 6.3. Tools for engaging citizens in monitoring and evaluation of CE processes

introducing ICT-tools into the citizen engagement process can help to boost effectiveness<sup>41</sup>.

There is a myriad of tools to apply across the public participation spectrum<sup>42</sup>. Usually tools for strengthening government-citizen relations are a mix of several characteristics and approaches. Some examples of innovative tools citizen engagement will be presented in the following section. Success in their implementation requires their adaptation to the different contexts and countries, as well as a great deal of creativity and analysis, even to develop new tools, so as to meet the challenges.

Before going further into their description, it is important to recall that by applying these tools, citizens will **be enabled to participate in setting the policy agenda and in shaping the dialogue between themselves and government**. Citizens may even themselves work out and propose policy options. To a significant extent, this approach implies that the government gives up exclusive control over the content and channels of the communication, thus allowing for partnership to develop. Nonetheless, whereas active citizen engagement means that citizens can exercise significant influence on decision-making, the principle that the final decision rests with the government remains. This is a crucial point: **neither partnerships and citizen engagement nor information and consultation reduce governments' rights and duties to make policy decisions**. Governments remain responsible for the decisions they take – and are accountable to elected parliaments and to the citizens as the sovereigns of democracy<sup>43</sup>.

### *Tools for engaging citizens in public agenda setting and policy analysis and design*

There are a number of tools aimed at engaging citizens in the groundwork stages of the public policy cycle, when agendas are set and policies are assessed and designed. Some of the most well-known include:

**Table 9: Deliberative polls**

DELIBERATIVE POLLS <sup>i</sup>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Builds on the opinion poll by incorporating the element of deliberation</li> <li>➤ Measures what public would think if it was informed and engaged around an issue</li> <li>➤ Composed of a randomly selected sample of citizens</li> <li>➤ Large or small groups (50 to 500+ persons)</li> <li>➤ Involves polling the participants, followed by discussion, and finally, polling them again.</li> </ul>	
Strengths	Limitations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Provides insights into public opinions and how people come to decisions.</li> <li>➤ Seeks informed opinions, does not force people to reach consensus.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Incentives (e.g., honorarium, transportation) are important.</li> <li>➤ Requires a lot of preparation time.</li> <li>➤ Although sample size is large and random,</li> </ul>

<sup>41</sup> Please refer to section 5.3 *The key role of ICTs for enhancing CE*

<sup>42</sup> Inform-Consult-Involve-Collaborate-Empower

<sup>43</sup> Marc Gramberger: *Citizens as Partners. Information, Consultation and Public Participation in Policy-Making*, p. 60-61. 2001. OECD Publishing.

[http://www.ecnl.org/dindocuments/214\\_OECD\\_Engaging%20Citizens%20in%20Policy-Making.pdf](http://www.ecnl.org/dindocuments/214_OECD_Engaging%20Citizens%20in%20Policy-Making.pdf)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Large, random sample.</li> <li>➤ Changes in responses can be observed after the deliberative intervention takes place.</li> <li>➤ Helps to measure citizen's values and preferences.</li> <li>➤ Small size of individual groups and their non-intimidating nature allows for innovative ideas and active engagement.</li> </ul>	<p>ensuring representativeness is difficult.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Process requires significant resources and intensive time commitment for participants and organizers.</li> <li>➤ Can be difficult to generate neutral and complete briefing materials.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Key references:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Center for Deliberative Democracy. <a href="http://cdd.stanford.edu/polls/index.html">http://cdd.stanford.edu/polls/index.html</a></li> <li>• Fishkin JS. <i>The Voice of the People: Public Opinion and Democracy</i>. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995.</li> <li>• Fishkin JS, Luskin RC and Jowell R. "Deliberative Polling and Public Consultation". <i>Parliamentary Affairs</i> 2000, 53(4): 657-666.</li> </ul>	

**Table 10: Consensus conferences**

<b>CONSENSUS CONFERENCES</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ A dialogue between experts and citizens open to the public and the media.</li> <li>➤ The citizen panel plays the leading role (10 to 16 people who are introduced to the topic by a professional facilitator). The citizen panel formulates the questions to be taken up at the conference, and participates in the selection of experts to answer them. During the first day, experts present their answers to the questions from the citizen panel. During the second and third days, questions are clarified and discussions are held between the expert panel, the citizen panel and the audience. The citizen panel produces a final document, presenting their conclusions and recommendations.</li> <li>➤ The group of citizens is randomly selected. They are all lay persons (i.e. non-experts) regarding the issue at hand.</li> <li>➤ This tool is widely used in countries like Denmark and Norway, which have held consensus conferences on many current topics, such as genetically modified food.</li> </ul>	
<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Limitations</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Process of communicating information about the conference topic provides a strong educational component.</li> <li>➤ Useful method for obtaining informed opinions from lay persons on complex issues.</li> <li>➤ Small size of individual groups and their non-intimidating nature allows for innovative ideas and active engagement.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Recruitment method may not ensure representative participation.</li> <li>➤ Exclusive process.</li> <li>➤ Elaborate process requiring significant resources.</li> <li>➤ Multiple conferences may be required to ensure that broad, representative opinions are sought.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Key references:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Andersen IE and Jaeger B. "Scenario Workshops and Consensus Conferences: Towards more Democratic Decision-Making". <i>Science and Public Policy</i> 1999, 26(5): 331-340.</li> <li>• Danish Board of Technology. <a href="http://www.tekno.dk">www.tekno.dk</a></li> <li>• Einsiedel E. "Assessing a controversial medical technology: Canadian public consultations on xenotransplantation". <i>Public Understanding of Science</i> 2002, 11: 315-331.</li> <li>• Joss S. and Durant J. <i>Public Participation in Science: The Role of Consensus Conferences in Europe</i>. London: Science Museum, 1995. LOKA Institute. <a href="http://www.loka.org/pages/worldpanels.htm">www.loka.org/pages/worldpanels.htm</a></li> </ul>	

**Table 11: Citizens' juries**

<b>CITIZENS' JURIES</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Composed of 12-20 randomly selected individuals representative of their community who meet over several days to deliberate on a policy issue</li> <li>➤ They are informed about the issue, hear evidence from witnesses and cross-examine them. Then they discuss the matter amongst themselves and reach a decision.</li> <li>➤ Fairly similar to consensus conferences, but features a couple of important differences: Questioning takes place as in a courtroom, open to the public at large. The questioning and deliberation time is much shorter, and the conclusions do not have to yield a broad consensus. The government announces the initiative including the selection procedure for jury members, for instance via advertising. The procedure is open to all non-experts. In France, a citizen jury took part in a general review of the health system.</li> </ul>	
<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Limitations</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Provides opportunities to introduce new perspectives and challenge existing ones</li> <li>➤ More careful examination of the issue</li> <li>➤ Promotes consensus building</li> <li>➤ Brings legitimacy and democratic control to nonelected public bodies</li> <li>➤ Small size of individual groups and their non-intimidating nature allows for innovative ideas and active engagement.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Exclusive - only a few individuals participate</li> <li>➤ Potential problems lie in initial stages of preparation (e.g., jury selection, agenda setting, and witness selection)</li> <li>➤ Process requires significant resources and intensive time commitment for participants and organizers.</li> <li>➤ Influence on final policy isn't guaranteed if the government is not formally committed to take the results into consideration</li> <li>➤ Can be difficult to generate neutral and complete briefing materials</li> </ul>
<p><b>Key references:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coote A. and Lenaghan J. <i>Citizens' Juries: Theory into Practice</i>, London: Institute for Public Policy Research, 1997.</li> <li>• <i>Jefferson Center</i>. [www.jefferson-center.org].</li> <li>• Lenaghan J., New B. and Mitchell E. "Setting Priorities: Is there a Role for Citizens' Juries?" <i>British Medical Journal</i> 1996, 312: 1591-1593.</li> <li>• Lenaghan J. "Involving the Public in Rationing Decisions: The Experience of Citizens Juries". <i>Health Policy</i> 1999. 49(1-2): 45-61.</li> </ul>	

**Table 12: Citizen panels**

<b>CITIZEN PANELS</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ A randomly selected group of 12 citizens meets routinely (e.g., four times per year) to consider and discuss issues and make decisions.</li> <li>➤ Panels act as "sounding boards" for governing authority.</li> <li>➤ Attitudes, values and preferences of the panel are measured on a regular basis (generally via a survey)</li> <li>➤ Can take different forms: some are non-deliberative (mail or phone panels).</li> </ul>	
<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Limitations</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Proportion of panel members can be replaced at each meeting (i.e. 4 members) to increase the overall number of participants.</li> <li>➤ Multiple panels can be held and run to increase participant numbers (i.e. reduce exclusivity).</li> <li>➤ People benefit from discussion within groups, but also from discussing issues with family and friends outside of the panel.</li> <li>➤ Small size of individual groups and their non-</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Less exclusive than citizen juries, but still only a few individuals participate.</li> <li>➤ Potential problems in the initial stages of preparation (e.g., selection of panel members, agenda setting).</li> <li>➤ Process requires significant resources and intensive time commitment for participants and organizers.</li> <li>➤ Can be difficult to generate neutral and</li> </ul>

intimidating nature allows for innovative ideas and active engagement.	complete briefing materials.
<p><b>Key references:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Abelson J, Forest P-G, and the Effective Public Consultation Team. Towards More Meaningful, Informed and Effective Public Consultation. Final Report to the Canadian Health Services Research Foundation, 2004c.</li> <li>• Bowie C., Richardson A., and Sykes W. “Consulting the Public about Health Service Priorities”. <i>British Medical Journal</i> 1995, 311: 1155-1158.</li> <li>• Kathlene L and Martin JA. “Enhancing Citizen Participation: Panel Designs, Perspectives, and Policy Formation”. <i>Journal of Policy Analysis and Management</i> 1991, 10(1): 46-63.</li> </ul>	

### *Tools involving broader public engagement*

When aiming at involving more than a few citizens and experts, government can employ a group of tools geared at achieving broader public engagement. These tools may develop recommendations, policy proposals and cooperation in policy-making and implementation. Some of these tools are:

**Table 13: Scenario workshop**

<b>SCENARIO WORKSHOP</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ A scenario is an account or a synopsis of a possible course of action or events.</li> <li>➤ Before the workshop, a few scenarios are presented to inform the participants.</li> <li>➤ Between 24 to 32 participants come together for a two day meeting (decision makers, experts and citizens)</li> <li>➤ Using the scenarios as a starting point, the participants formulate new ideas, solutions and recommendations.</li> <li>➤ The sets of possible futures focus on a specific topic and policy area, or even on territorial units such as cities or countries.</li> <li>➤ Information tools such as articles, videos or exhibitions then carry the vision or scenarios to a broader public.</li> <li>➤ Several cities in the Netherlands have used this tool for involving large groups of citizens in local policy-making.</li> </ul>	
<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Limitations</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Generates dialogue, collaboration and planning between every actor.</li> <li>➤ Small size of individual groups and their non-intimidating nature allows for innovative ideas and active engagement.</li> <li>➤ In combination with consultation and citizen engagement instruments, vision- and scenario development engages citizens in an active discussion on policy options feeding back into policy-making.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Less exclusive than citizen juries, but still only a few individuals participate</li> <li>➤ Potential problems in the initial stages of preparation (e.g., selection of panel members, agenda setting)</li> <li>➤ Process requires significant resources and intensive time commitment for participants and organizers.</li> <li>➤ Can be difficult to generate neutral and complete briefing materials.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Key references:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Andersen IE and Jaeger B. “Scenario Workshops and Consensus Conferences: Towards more Democratic Decision-Making”. <i>Science and Public Policy</i> 1999, 26(5): 331-340.</li> <li>• Danish Board of Technology. <a href="http://www.tekno.dk">www.tekno.dk</a></li> </ul>	

**Table 14: Citizens’ fora**

<b>CITIZENS' FORA</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ A citizens' forum gathers a large and broad group of civil society representatives around a specific policy area or issue.</li> <li>➤ It provides a framework to deliberate and co-operate, to develop policy proposals as well as to engage a wider number of citizens.</li> <li>➤ The outcome of citizens' fora is a direct input for governmental policy and again reaches further groups of citizens.</li> <li>➤ Citizens' fora can become ongoing activities run by civil society organizations.</li> <li>➤ In Norway, the Youth Forum for Democracy gathers citizens aged 15 to 26, many of whom are representatives of youth organizations. The forum identifies barriers preventing young people getting involved in politics and proposes new policies and measures. The minister of children and family affairs receives these proposals directly.</li> </ul>	
Strengths	Limitations
➤	➤
<p><b>Key references:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frutos de la Democracia. Manual de Implementación del Programa Auditoría Ciudadana, 2009, PNUD. <a href="http://www.auditoriaciudadana.com.ar/informes/frutos_democracia.pdf">http://www.auditoriaciudadana.com.ar/informes/frutos_democracia.pdf</a></li> </ul>	

**Table 15: Dialogue processes**

<b>DIALOGUE PROCESSES</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ A citizens' dialogue brings together a group of citizens to work through a workbook or guide that includes basic information on the issue (small group deliberation). The group moderator encourages participants to consider and reflect on each of the viewpoints provided.</li> <li>➤ A dialogue session can last up to three hours. The participants move from defining values and identifying common ground to putting forward concrete actions that can constructively inform policy development.</li> <li>➤ Dialogue processes directly engage broad group of citizens in policy-making. To this end, they use several tools adapted to different phases of the process. As an example, citizens' input may be gathered in a series of open, interactive workshops throughout the country, as with Canada's Rural Dialogue or the Dialogue Process in the framework of the Canadian National Forum on Health. The input is used in conferences with experts and representatives of interest groups and the government, which work out draft policy proposals. These proposals can then be checked through citizen workshops before the policy proposal is finalized. The structures created for the dialogue process can also be used for ongoing active engagement.</li> </ul>	
Strengths	Limitations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Strives to inform policy and program development with an expression of citizens' underlying values.</li> <li>➤ Gives participants an opportunity to listen to other views, enlarge and possibly change their own point of view.</li> <li>➤ Provides information in the form of a workbook or guide carefully crafted to represent several perspectives on an issue, lending a layer of complexity to the discussion.</li> <li>➤ Small size of individual groups and their non-intimidating nature allows for innovative ideas and active engagement.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Although sample size is large and random, ensuring representativeness is difficult.</li> <li>➤ Process requires significant resources and intensive time commitment for participants and organizers.</li> <li>➤ Can be difficult to generate neutral and complete briefing materials.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Key references:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Democratic Dialogue Network,</li> </ul>	

- Dialogue Documents, <http://www.democraticdialoguenetwork.org/documents.pl?s=1:ss=11> , and Case Studies <http://www.democraticdialoguenetwork.org/documents.pl?s=1:ss=5>
- Canadian Policy Research Networks. <http://www.cprn.org/en/theme.cfm?theme=4>

**Table 16: 21st Century Town Meeting**

<b>21<sup>st</sup> CENTURY TOWN MEETING<sup>44</sup></b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Large-scale forums (100–5000 people) engage citizens in public decision-making processes at the local, regional, and national levels of governance, usually over the course of a day.</li> <li>➤ Participants deliberate at tables of 10, facilitated by trained facilitators.</li> <li>➤ Dialogue is supported by keypad polling, networked laptop computers, and (at times) interactive television and results from small groups are shared with the entire group, prioritized, and reported to decision makers at the end of the day</li> <li>➤ The 21st Century Town Meeting process has been used in numerous public deliberations including a nationwide discussion on Social Security reform, planning the redevelopment of the World Trade Center site in New York City, and as a biennial citywide process for strategic planning in Washington, D.C.</li> </ul>	
<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Limitations</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Demographically representative groups of citizens are recruited through a variety of means, including grassroots organizing and the media.</li> <li>➤ Major stakeholders are engaged in the process and a clear link to decision making is established from the start.</li> <li>➤ Neutral and balanced background materials on issues are used to inform discussion, and experts and policy makers are present to participate in table discussions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ ICT-tools play a key role in the process and they are not always available (digital divide).</li> <li>➤ Process requires significant resources and intensive time commitment for participants and organizers.</li> </ul>

**Table 17: Study circles**

<b>STUDY CIRCLES<sup>45</sup></b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Involve large numbers of people in discussion among multiple groups of 8–15 people within a community or region meeting regularly over a period of months to discuss a designated issue.</li> <li>➤ These groups come together during the same period of time (a weekend to several weeks) to develop solutions to a common concern.</li> <li>➤ Community-wide study circles culminate in an “action forum” where all participants from study circle groups throughout the community come together to develop an action strategy to solve a common problem.</li> <li>➤ At the end of the process, all participants take part in a community meeting, called an Action Forum, to create strategies for the future.</li> <li>➤ The objective is often to help people become more active in their neighborhoods and communities by engaging them in informed discussions.</li> <li>➤ Study circles have been used in communities to tackle a range of issues including education, racism, and police relations.</li> </ul>	
<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Limitations</b>

<sup>44</sup> For further information, visit <http://www.americaspeaks.org>

<sup>45</sup> For further information, visit: <http://www.studyircles.org>

Along with planning, **evaluation is another great investment** for citizen engagement<sup>46</sup>. Governments also have to evaluate information, consultation and citizen engagement activities in order to determine their success in strengthening government-citizen relations. They need to assess the extent to which activities are efficient, effective and adequate in terms of reaching the objectives established beforehand.

## 5.5 The Key Role of ICT in Enhancing Citizen Engagement

Some practitioners argue that Internet has the capacity to re-energize representative democracy, but that most governments have not yet realized its full potential. Indeed, most citizen engagement tools can be adapted to an online environment, but this requires creativity, planning and support, as well as resources.

There is a wide array of online technologies that can be employed, including email, instant messaging, mailing lists and newsgroups, text messages, online forms (including surveys and petitions), online live chat events, bulletin boards, online forums, message boards, wikis, social networks and blogs. Choosing the right technology is a matter that must be decided in a given context, keeping in mind budgets, goals and timelines.

The table below presents some of the opportunities and challenges of online citizen engagement (some of which apply also to any citizen engagement practices).

**Table 18: Challenges and Opportunities of Online Citizen Engagement**

Opportunities	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transparency and speed.</li> <li>• Increased citizen access to information.</li> <li>• Increased access to public opinion for policy makers.</li> <li>• Potential to increase number of participants.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Selection and representativeness of participants.</li> <li>• The digital divide – determined by location, age, gender and income.</li> <li>• Information overload (both citizens and solicitors of information).</li> <li>• Asynchronous dialogue leading to less focused conversations.</li> <li>• Institutional skepticism.</li> </ul>

At the same time it is important to be aware of the **limits of online approaches**, before introducing ICT in the citizen engagement process:

- (i) **Digital divide:** The digital divide describes the gap between those with access to ICT-tools (and especially the Internet) and those who do not. This gap exists between individuals at different levels of income, education, gender and age. It also exists between households, businesses and geographic areas and entire countries. It sets significant limits on any government plans to rely exclusively on ICT in reaching citizens and raises the question of how to ensure equal access for all citizens.

<sup>46</sup> Please refer to chapter 6, namely 6.3. Tools for engaging citizens in monitoring and evaluation of CE processes, for further information on them.

- (ii) **Usability for special groups:** Some groups in society have particular problems accessing and using ICT. These are, for instance, persons with disabilities, the elderly and minority groups where language may be a barrier.
- (iii) **Computer and ICT literacy of citizens:** Even if citizens have access to ICT, this does not mean that they know how to use it. ICT-tools require users to have specific skills and “computer-literacy”. These are skills which are not acquired overnight and for which training is often needed.
- (iv) **Human capacity in government:** Computer literacy may also be a problem on the government’s side. Actively using ICT in government-citizen relations also demands higher skill levels. The use of ICT is also likely to increase the amount of feedback, which can strain human, as well as technical resources.
- (v) **Technical capacities:** Using ICT to support information, consultation and citizen engagement requires adequate technical equipment on both sides: that of government and that of citizens. When activities become successful, technical needs on the government’s side can quickly increase.
- (vi) **Costs and financial limits:** In comparison to other tools, ICT usually looks like a cost-saving activity. This can indeed be the case. At the same time, higher demands and expectations in terms of quantity, quality and punctuality can set off these cost-savings.
- (vii) **Issues of legal status and accountability:** The legal and policy framework for some ICT-based activities has not yet been fully developed. This concerns, for instance, the role and legal status of government officials during online consultation and citizen engagement events. This, in turn, raises concerns regarding their accountability.
- (viii) **Privacy and security:** Issues of privacy and data security are a major source of concern for citizens – and these must be addressed if the use of ICT for online information, consultation and citizen engagement is to fulfill its promise.
- (ix) **Specifics of the medium:** ICTs are an electronic means and currently work with electronic displays. They do not create immediate contact between people. ICTs depend upon a supply of energy and good telecommunication infrastructure and connectivity to work properly. These and other specifics create limitations for using ICT in strengthening government-citizen relations, where, in many cases, non-electronic means may offer comparative advantages<sup>47</sup>.

However, these limits should not cause governments to withdraw from using ICT. Some measures to address the challenges are the following:

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<sup>47</sup> Amanda Sheedy: *Handbook on Citizen Engagement: Beyond Consultation*. Mar 2008 CPRN (Canadian Policy Research Networks). [http://www.cprn.org/documents/49583\\_EN.pdf](http://www.cprn.org/documents/49583_EN.pdf)

- (i) **Ensuring access:** Government can create broader access to ICTs through placing connected PCs or electronic cubicles in public libraries, in public schools, in retirement homes for the elderly, and in other public spaces.
- (ii) **Consider special needs:** Speech recognition technologies for the visually impaired, or special support for the elderly, are examples of ways to help special groups in accessing and using ICTs.
- (iii) **Encourage familiarization:** Governments can raise awareness and promote the familiarization with ICTs through local presentations and training, for example at community centers.
- (iv) **Overcome internal technical limitations within government:** providing adequate and updated technical equipment, ICT training and support to staff. Overall organizational coordination may help to assure the success of these efforts.
- (v) **Ensure privacy and security by applying amendments:** to existing legislation and policies for example personal data, authentication, etc. can clarify open questions in these areas and provide greater guarantees to citizens.
- (vi) **Matching ICT tools with traditional citizen engagement tools:** This can offer innovative combinations. Governments can experiment with, and collect the benefits of new opportunities through ICT, while maintaining their traditional activities and even using ICT to support them.

To sum up, governments can address some of the challenges posed by the use of ICT (for example access, special needs of vulnerable groups). Other limitations, however, such as the digital divide and the specifics of the medium, are expected to remain rather strong at the moment<sup>48</sup>.

## 5.6 Practical Check-List for Implementing Citizen Engagement

Finally, as a colophon to this chapter, a **practical check-list** for implementing citizen engagement based on the OECD Handbook tips<sup>49</sup> is presented:

1. **Take it seriously:** It's not about how many documents are produced or the number of events that unfold, but rather their content, their process and what is done with the information. Citizen engagement requires planning and dedication.

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<sup>48</sup> Marc Gramberger: *Citizens as Partners. Information, Consultation and Public Participation in Policy-Making*, p. 79-82.2001. OECD Publishing.

[http://www.ecnl.org/dindocuments/214\\_OECD\\_Engaging%20Citizens%20in%20Policy-Making.pdf](http://www.ecnl.org/dindocuments/214_OECD_Engaging%20Citizens%20in%20Policy-Making.pdf)

<sup>49</sup> ibis

2. **Engage your staff:** Team members deserve to be “engaged” as well, either for the project at hand or for internal policy and program implementation. Passion and commitment are core values to be developed.
3. **Start from a citizen-centered vision:** the success of the engagement process is dependent on the ability to determine why a citizen might be interested in participating.
4. **Carefully plan the activities:** Planning is an investment that will bear fruit at all stages of the citizen engagement process.
5. **Be creative:** There is no “one-size-fits-all” model of citizen engagement. Every situation requires a unique approach and careful selection of tools (including ICT-tools when feasible)
6. **Deliver proper facilitation:** Balancing different interests and perspectives is the ongoing challenge of any government. Citizen engagement provides another source of input and opens the doors to understanding between differing parties.
7. **Allow catharsis:** People may perceive citizen engagement forums as a space to vent. Processes are not always perfect.
8. **Always meet the commitments:** Essential in building trust and citizen engagement.
9. **Carry on periodical internal and external evaluations:** Check efficient, effective and adequate the activities are in terms of reaching the objectives established beforehand. This enables adjustments and helps in deciding what should be preserved, removed or added to the process.
10. **Document, systematize and disseminate the process and the outcomes:** An important contribution to learning and knowledge sharing at local, national and global levels.

## Chapter 6. The Importance of Monitoring and Evaluation

Citizen engagement is an emerging field. As such, **reflective practice, critical thinking and adequate monitoring and evaluation are crucial**, as they enable those involved in the process assess whether and to what extent the process has (or hasn't) been successful in achieving its goals and determine the underlying reasons for the success/failure. Indeed, and on the basis of both conceptual and empirical foundations, formal monitoring and evaluation (M&E) is gradually emerging as an integral part of good practice in citizen engagement.

### 6.1 The purpose of Monitoring and Evaluation in Citizen Engagement Processes

When conceived as an integral part of citizen engagement -from design to implementation-, monitoring and evaluation serves a twofold purpose:

- It is **central for accountability –and ultimately credibility-** vis-à-vis the institutions that create the space for engagement and allocate resources to make the process possible, as well as for the actors involved throughout the process and others who may not be directly involved but are interested in the process;

- It provides the **necessary inputs for learning** -and eventual adaptation during the engagement process- and, over the longer term, is the basis for improving engagement practice and contributing to process knowledge.

Conventionally monitoring and evaluation has been considered, at best, as a disconnected exercise from the design and implementation of the citizen engagement process. What's more, there has been a traditional clear-cut distinction between **monitoring** –conceived as an ongoing activity, falling under the responsibility of the team managing the engagement process and aiming at providing periodic reviews by gathering relevant data- and **evaluation** –understood as a time-bound activity, usually conducted by external experts once the process has come to an end, which focuses on assessing and drawing conclusions from the data collected.

However, as greater emphasis is placed on the need to ensure better internal learning - gathered from the process, as it progressively unfolds-, **these distinctions become increasingly blurred**. Monitoring and evaluation starts to be conceived as an inclusive and unified, integrated stream of activities, well embedded in the citizen engagement process; its goal being to ensure a continuous gathering and assessing of information (both quantitative and qualitative) to make judgements about progress towards, objectives and final goals and to inform decisions about possible adjustments.

## 6.2 Elements of a Good Monitoring and Evaluation Practice

Below are elements some key elements of a good monitoring and evaluation practice in citizen engagement processes:

- (i) Clearly define **what is to be evaluated** (process/outputs/outcomes/impact/etc) and how it will be observed and measured. It is important to spell out which levels of the process are subjected to monitoring and evaluation. The deeper the monitoring and evaluation goes (going beyond the process and outputs level), the more learning is enabled.

<b>Levels to be considered in monitoring and evaluation</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The <b>process</b> refers to the activities that are planned and organised in the course of the engagement exercise. Monitoring at this level usually consists of reviewing what actually took place.</li> <li>▪ <b>Outputs</b> are the direct results of the activities that are organised (e.g. reports issued; number of participants involved, other documents issued, etc.). Monitoring outputs provides the most basic level of accountability.</li> <li>▪ <b>Outcomes</b> (both intended and unintended) are the effects and changes that the engagement process produces or contributes to produce in the short term (e.g. agreements reached, skills gained; perspectives gained; etc). Monitoring at this level is central to enable learning and to decide on possible mid-course adjustments.</li> <li>▪ <b>Impact</b> (both intended and unintended) encompasses the longer-term effect of the outcomes (e.g. new leaderships emerging; institutional strengthening of participants; laws emerging as the result of an agreement; etc). Assessing impact is challenging as it entails a longer time-span (impact normally becomes evident after a number of years) and confronts the problem of attribution (it is generally difficult to establish a clear causal link between outcomes and impact).</li> </ul>

- (ii) **Build monitoring and evaluation into the dialogue process**, from its outset (monitoring and evaluation should be embedded in the process starting from the design phase) and **allocate sufficient resources** (human, material, financial). By doing so, time and frustration will be saved, and an enhanced learning dimension will be enabled, as clarity is required in articulating the overall purpose and strategy of the engagement initiative.
- (iii) Balance **accountability with learning orientation**. Ideally the monitoring and evaluation system should be designed to provide ongoing learning throughout the process and determine when goals (in terms of output and outcomes) are met. Ultimately, a robust monitoring and evaluation system can also be an effective form of risk management.
- (iv) Provide personnel involved with citizen engagement processes with timely and **adequate training and subsequent opportunities** on how to design, plan, monitor and evaluate engagement exercises;
- (v) Define **benchmarks against which to measure progress and develop indicators (both quantitative and qualitative) with which to approximate change** (this is particularly relevant for intangible outputs and outcomes) and capture the learnings from the process, namely from its key elements as shown in the table below:

	Sample of key elements of the engagement process	Sample of benchmarks and indicators to be used
1	<b>Common goals &amp; strong sense of commitment and ownership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Stakeholders' expectations are clearly spelled out during the preparatory phase and taken on board;</li> <li>▪ The scope of the process and expected outcomes are clear to all stakeholders involved;</li> <li>▪ The agenda of the process is jointly built, based on a shared diagnosis of key challenges to be addressed;</li> <li>▪ The dialogue focuses on windows of opportunity, where change is feasible and realistic;</li> <li>▪ Follow-up of the process is debated;</li> <li>▪ A predefined mechanism exists to ensure a structured follow-up of the process and to trigger change.</li> </ul>
2	<b>Timely, regular and interactive exchange of information</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A system exists to ensure regular communication and feedback to all stakeholders;</li> <li>▪ Realistic deadlines for consultation allowing wide and relevant consultation among stakeholders;</li> <li>▪ Use of online tools, allowing for regular and inter-active exchange of</li> </ul>

		information.
<b>3</b>	<b>Transparency and Accountability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A governance body (in the form of a Steering Committee/ Task Force) is created to ensure an efficient and shared process;</li> <li>▪ The governance body meets regularly and has an influence over the process (both contents and process-wise);</li> <li>▪ Monitoring systems are in place to check progress;</li> <li>▪ Governance issues can be openly addressed through the Steering Committee/Task Force;</li> <li>▪ The way in which recommendations were dealt with is appropriate and effective;</li> </ul>
<b>4</b>	<b>Engagement methodologies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ An engagement methodology is used, which is inclusive, efficient and democratic;</li> <li>▪ Degree to which planned activities were organised and outputs reached and quality of them;</li> </ul>
<b>5</b>	<b>Participatory bottom-up approach to reinforce ownership among the actors in order to legitimise the process</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A methodology is drafted to define mechanisms for identification and selection of actors to be involved;</li> <li>▪ Actors involved are diverse, legitimate and representative, as well as fully committed;</li> <li>▪ A representative set of actors is mobilised and takes part in the process;</li> <li>▪ The diversity of civil society and other actors is respected;</li> </ul>
<b>6</b>	<b>Institutional internal coordination</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Adequate coordination mechanisms are established among governmental services;</li> <li>▪ Links are established with other multi-stakeholder processes;</li> <li>▪ Costs (with respect to the degree to which they were budgeted and reasonable)</li> </ul>

- (vi) **Actively involve participants in the monitoring and evaluation of the process and its outputs and outcomes.** Making the monitoring and evaluation of an engagement process participatory is good practice, as it is consistent with governing principles and key conditions, such as inclusiveness and joint ownerships and it enhances the constructive dynamics that the engagement process aims to generate<sup>50</sup>.
- (vii) **Collect and disseminate good practices** in order to learn from the experience and enhance the engagement capacity of all stakeholders involved<sup>51</sup>.

<sup>50</sup> See next section for further information on tools to engage citizens in monitoring and evaluation of citizen engagement

<sup>51</sup> See section 6.4. for further information on communication and outreach

### 6.3. Tools for Engaging Citizens in the Monitoring and Evaluation of Citizen Engagement Processes

Several tools can be used to promote the engagement of citizens in the monitoring and evaluation of citizen engagement processes. They include:

- **Informal reviews:** Through informal contacts with CSOs and citizens, government officials can learn how their policies, programmes and activities have been received. Through open discussions with government staff, senior managers can learn about how the activities are valued internally. These reviews can be formalized and extended into workshops, or else, remain simple tools, which do not deliver systematic information but provide some indications on the success of the activities.
- **Collecting and analyzing quantitative data:** Governments can collect data on a wide range of relevant areas, such as the number of requests for documents and information products, on the amount and content of complaints and proposals received, on attendance of events, etc. To collect and compare these figures across ministries and bodies, government needs to establish standard procedures and measurements. In the framework of its Freedom of Information Act, Norway collects data from all ministries and the prime minister's office on all requests for recorded documents, refusals and their reasons.
- **Participant surveys and public opinion polls:** Surveys among attendees of events or readers of government publications can reveal information about how citizens view their contact with government agencies and how they rate government outputs. Public opinion polls can also help governments to determine the effects of their activities. Italy uses surveys to assess the impact of its information activities. The Swiss government conducts a public opinion poll after each referendum in order to learn more about citizens' voting reasoning and their sources of information.
- **Reviews:** These are systematic and intensive evaluations of activities. They can involve diverse and broad data collection and in-depth analysis. This tool can be especially important for activities that are highly relevant, resource-intensive, experimental or complex. Canada and the United Kingdom ran intensive evaluations on broad consultation activities and revealed many aspects for improvement, such as the need for better co-ordination between services and participation of high-level civil servants.

### 6.4 Communication and Outreach Activities as Part of Citizen Engagement Processes

**Once reviews and evaluations are conducted, they need to be communicated within the government** via reports and presentations. Governments may also choose to publish the evaluation reports, thereby contributing to higher transparency and accountability<sup>52</sup>.

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<sup>52</sup> Marc Gramberger: *Citizens as Partners. Information, Consultation and Public Participation in Policy-Making*, p. 66. 2001. OECD Publishing.  
[http://www.ecnl.org/dindocuments/214\\_OECD\\_Engaging%20Citizens%20in%20Policy-Making.pdf](http://www.ecnl.org/dindocuments/214_OECD_Engaging%20Citizens%20in%20Policy-Making.pdf)

**Giving transparent feedback to participants distinguishes citizen engagement from consultation.** Reporting audiences should include decision-makers, funders and, most importantly, participants. Reports should include an overview of the whole process as well as outcomes and visibly indicate where in the decision-making process the input fits and what will follow from the said input. Reports should be prepared with careful consideration on what citizens will want to know and should be written in an accessible language(s).

At this stage, key points are to:

- Uphold an ongoing dialogue with participants.
- Inform participants of the findings (when appropriate and possible share draft report with participants for their review) and the impacts on proposed policy, legislation, regulation and program changes.
- Keep participants informed about the next steps.

It is important to document and publicize the successes, challenges, and lessons learnt of citizen engagement processes<sup>53</sup>. This will make an important contribution to learning in this field as there are great initiatives worldwide, but not enough available information on them.

## **Chapter 7 - Organized and Effective Participation of Non-State Actors in Public Development Affairs**

Non State Actors (NSAs) have taken on ever expanding developmental roles and responsibilities, progressively affirming themselves in the last decades as development actors in their own right. The efforts of NSAs worldwide complement those of governments, on the basis of their manifold roles as actors of social change. In evaluating the implementation of development targets such as the MDGs, it is increasingly clear that progress, and ultimately success, requires an approach that redefines the relationship between governments and NSAs.

### ***7.1. Non-State Actors: definition, roles and organisational forms***

#### ***Definition of Non-State Actors and Civil Society***

Non-state actor is a broad term, which generally refers to the sphere of institutionalised voluntary collective actions by citizens, which develop around shared interests and purposes. The term encompasses, in addition to NGOs, many different categories of actors, including private sector organisations (considered only insofar as they are

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<sup>53</sup> The Division for Public Administration and Development Management of UNDESA organizes the annual UN Public Service Awards to reward the creative achievements and contributions of public service institutions that lead to a more effective and responsive public administration in countries worldwide. For more information on nomination and past winners go to <http://www.unpan.org/unpsa>

involved in non-profit activities; like private sector associations or chambers of commerce), economic and social actors (such as trade unions), and a diverse group of actors falling under the general heading of 'Civil Society'.

There are countless definitions of Civil Society, grounded on the diverse conceptual frameworks that exist. According to CIVICUS<sup>54</sup>, for example, Civil Society can be defined "as the arena, outside of the family, the State and the market, where people voluntarily associate on the basis of common interests. As such civil society is composed of heterogeneous forces in a complex scenario, where diverse values and interests interact and struggles for power often occur". These ideas can also be found in the definition provided by the Centre for Civil Society at the London School of Economics, according to which "Civil society refers to the arena of uncoerced collective action around shared interests, purposes and values (...). Civil society commonly embraces a diversity of spaces, actors and institutional forms, varying in their degree of formality, autonomy and power<sup>55</sup>". Civil societies around the world comprise of diverse organizations, as shown in the table below:

**Table 19: Types of Civil Society Organisations**

Types of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>NGOs:</b> The term NGO (Non-Governmental Organisation) is sometimes used synonymously with civil society organisation. In general, the term NGO is used to refer to those organisations that work to help people and societies (assisting local populations directly or through grass-roots organisations) from humanitarian, political or religious motives. NGOs play an important role in development cooperation as facilitators of cooperation with, for example, grassroots organisations and informal local organisations. They can be International (INGOs) or National NGOs.</li> <li>▪ <b>Popular and grass roots organisations:</b> Popular organisations and movements as well as grassroots organisations organise people with the aim of serving and protecting their own interests at national/regional and local level usually through self-help activities. They encompass farmers' organisations, women's rights organisations, indigenous population organisations, etc.</li> <li>▪ <b>Professional groupings and organisations:</b> Membership based organisations, created to represent and defend the professional interests of their member (e.g. bar associations, medical associations, journalist federations, academic societies, Chambers of commerce).</li> <li>▪ <b>Women's associations:</b> Active in awareness-raising, empowerment of marginalized groups, interest representation, etc.</li> <li>▪ <b>Church and other faith-based organisations:</b> Often have a high degree of legitimacy among co-religionists.</li> <li>▪ <b>Traditional organisations:</b> So-called "traditional" political, social cultural and ethnic structures at village and local level. They play a central role and most frequently have a high degree of popular legitimacy. While the traditional structures can ensure broad participation and consultation in a local community, they can also contain strongly authoritarian elements</li> <li>▪ <b>Cultural organisations</b> (cultural and sports groups) and <b>students groups</b>.</li> <li>▪ <b>Foundations:</b> Provide funding to CSOs, conduct research activities, etc.</li> <li>▪ <b>Coalitions:</b> Networks, platforms and other advocacy groups</li> <li>▪ <b>Others:</b> Think tanks and the policy research community.</li> </ul>

<sup>54</sup> <http://www.civicus.org/>

<sup>55</sup> "What is Civil Society?". Centre for Civil Society, London School of Economics. 2004-03-01. [http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/CCS/what\\_is\\_civil\\_society.htm](http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/CCS/what_is_civil_society.htm). Retrieved 2006-10-30.

Notwithstanding the differences between the diverse activist and scholar traditions, two fundamental features of the NSAs are commonly acknowledged: (i) the evidence that the civil society (and thus the NSAs sphere) **is not a uniform and homogeneous group of organisations**. Quite the contrary, NSAs are a myriad of particular interests, which are institutionalised to express consented action, but may also express conflicts and rivalries; (ii) the evidence that even though in theory the NSA organisational forms are distinct from those of the state, family and market, in practice **the boundaries between state, civil society, family and market are often complex, blurred and negotiated**.

Even though NSAs are by definition autonomous from the State and are not driven by purely private or economic interests as corporate entities are, they increasingly interact with governments and the political sphere, as well as with the private sector. As several scholars underline, a dynamic relationship among them, particularly between NSAs, the government and other state institutions (such as the Parliament or the Court of Auditors,) is an indicator of the maturity of the democratic structures.

#### *Roles performed by Non-State Actors*

Echoing their heterogeneity and diversity NSAs, both individually and collectively, **can perform a wide range of tasks and roles**, ranging from local, straight-forward activities that meet the immediate needs of the communities, to advocacy and lobbying activities to influence national –and even international - political debates and development policies. While some NSAs provide an institutionalised channel for the expression of the interests of the poor and excluded sectors of society, others perform watchdog roles of the state with a view to develop and extend democratic forms of governance. The table below outlines major NSA areas of work and potential roles<sup>56</sup>:

**Table 20: NSA areas of work and roles**

NSA areas of work and roles
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<sup>56</sup> Adapted from Open Forum country and sectoral consultations: a synthesis of outcomes. Towards a framework for CSO development effectiveness. Prepared by Brian Tomlinson & Rose Wanjiru. September 2010.

- (i) **Direct engagement and support for communities, poor and marginalized groups** in self-help and local development innovation;
- (ii) **Delivery of basic services and essential infrastructures** at local level, particularly in social services such as health protection and care, education, water and sanitation, while empowering communities to demand the fulfilment of their right to receive these services from the government;
- (iii) **Empower marginalized grass roots communities and people living in poverty, particularly women**, participation in public policy, through capacity building and strengthening social mobilization and peoples' voices in democratizing local and national development;
- (iv) **Monitor government and donor policies and development practices**, through policy research and development, policy dialogue and facilitating democratic accountability for excluded and marginalized populations, based on local knowledge;
- (v) **Facilitate cooperation and collaboration** with local government authorities and other development actors and organizations;
- (vi) **Enrich the public policy agenda** with NSA knowledge, issues, perspectives and proposals;
- (vii) **Monitor government and donor policies and development practices**, through policy research and development, policy dialogue and facilitating democratic accountability for excluded and marginalized populations, based on local knowledge;
- (viii) **Build trust among the different social groups and encourage dialogue** between members of society and state institutions, with a view to improve the quality of civic life and societal governance;
- (ix) **Educate and help shape social values of democracy, solidarity and social justice** through production of knowledge, sharing information and encouraging action for global citizenship;
- (x) **Find and leverage sources of financing and human resources for development** directly as recipients or as donor channels at local, national and international levels;
- (xi) **Connect and create networks among NSAs** in ways that encourages accountability to people for positive impacts on the rights of target populations.

NSAs, and particularly CSOs, **can bring a distinct added value** to development policies and programmes on the basis of their nature as **self-governing and voluntary organisations**, through: (i) their right-based approach to development<sup>57</sup>; (ii) their capacity to react rapidly and flexibly; (iii) their capacity to reach out to the most marginalised groups of people and link their needs with global issues and (iv) the power to promote and trigger social innovation<sup>58</sup>. Ultimately, civil society's actions translate into **not-for-profit activities for the collective benefit of society**, defining them against other civic coalitions, which subvert the public good (such as organised crime groups)<sup>59</sup>.

Governments worldwide, though at different pace and levels, have recognised this development and progressively embraced **participatory development approaches to ensure the gradual involvement of organised NSAs in their public policy-forming cycles**, both as service providers (in the delivery of basic services) and as partners in dialogue.

<sup>57</sup> A rights-based approach to development rejects the notion that people living in poverty can only meet their basic needs as passive recipients of charity. On the contrary, people are the active subjects of their own development, as they seek to claim their rights. The approach thus aims to transform the self-perpetuating vicious cycle of poverty, disempowerment and conflict into a virtuous cycle in which all people, as rights holders, can demand accountability from states as duty-bearers, and where duty bearers have both the willingness and capacity to fulfil, protect, and promote human rights.

<sup>58</sup> "Preliminary wrapping-up document. Working Groups 1 & 2". Structured Dialogue. December 2010. [https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/aidco/index.php/SD:\\_Wrap-up\\_session\\_EDD](https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/aidco/index.php/SD:_Wrap-up_session_EDD)

<sup>59</sup> Public Oversight of the Security Sector. A Handbook for Civil Society Organizations. Editors: Eden Cole (DCAF); Kerstin Eppert (UNDP) and Katrin Kinzelbach. UNDP 2008. <http://www.dcaf.ch/Publications/Publication-Detail?lng=en&id=95396>

**Table 21: NSAs as both service providers and partners in dialogue**

<b>NSAs as both service providers and partners in dialogue</b>
<p><b>Non-state actors as service providers:</b> In many countries, non-state actors have built a tradition and considerable experience in service delivery in sectors such as health and education. Increasingly central and local governments acknowledge this potential and seek to promote stronger linkages (via, for instance Public-Private-Partnerships and alliances) between their development efforts and those of non-state actor organisations.</p> <p><b>Non-state actors as partners in dialogue in the formulation and evaluation of policies:</b> The role of NSAs cannot be restricted to that of service providers on behalf of central and local governments. As an outcome of the progressive emergence and consolidation of NSAs, instrumental views of NSAs are progressively being overcome, and multi-stakeholder approaches to development, which explicitly recognise NSAs as drivers of change in governance and development processes, are gradually emerging, grounded on a new paradigm of managing “the public good” (designing, executing and evaluating public policies).</p>

However, the **rapid growth and diversification of NSA** confronts governments with a number of outstanding challenges, particularly:

- (i) The need, as already highlighted in chapter 5 when referring to the “*who to invite*” question, to **acquire a better understanding of local NSAs dynamics** (who is who and who does what?), **as a pre-condition for an effective engagement with relevant actors**. To this end, mapping studies<sup>60</sup> can be a powerful tool in the classification of different categories of NSAs and in the identification of their added value;
- (ii) The call for **respecting the diversity of NSAs** (and the specificity of the different categories of actors) in participation and engagement processes, thus ensuring an actor-based approach;
- (iii) The challenge of **reconciling divergent –even opposed- views from different sectors and groups** and;
- (iv) The question of **engaging specific populations** like the poor, young, women, indigenous and other vulnerable groups, who are often excluded because of lack of knowledge and/or access to information, and physical and cultural distances to the decision-making centres.

Most of these issues have already been identified and analysed, particularly in chapter 4 (4.1.Pre-requisites of effective citizen engagement) and chapter 5 (5. 3.Who to engage with).

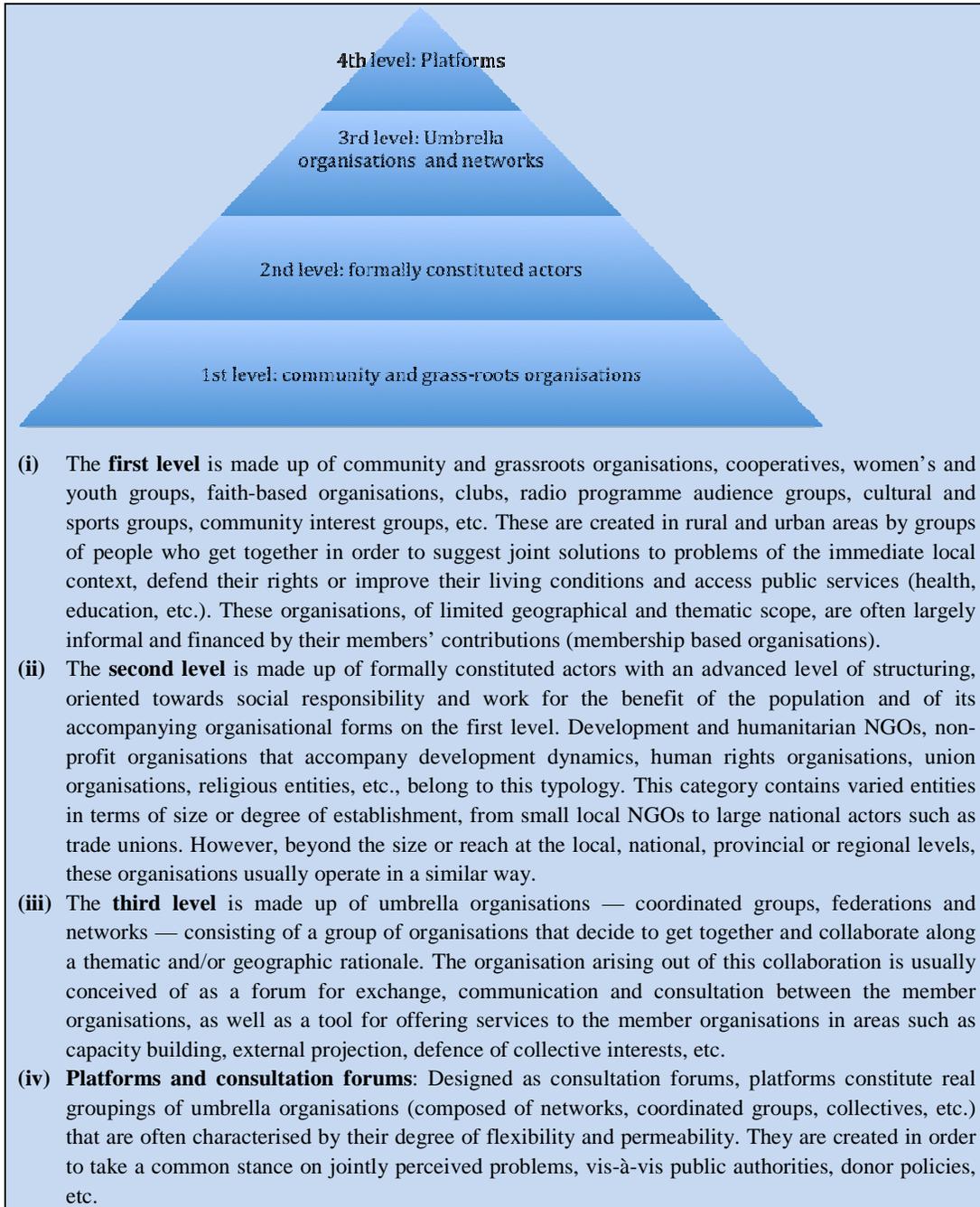
#### *Organisation of Non-State Actors*

Even though there is no single model that can capture the organization of NSAs, a number of tools are available, such as the pyramid below, which illustrates different levels of organization and structuring of NSAs.

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<sup>60</sup> For further information, consult [https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/aidco/index.php/9EDF:\\_Identification\\_of\\_capacity\\_building\\_programmes](https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/aidco/index.php/9EDF:_Identification_of_capacity_building_programmes)

**Figure 2: Levels of organization and structuring of NSAs**



## ***7.2. The Importance of an Enabling Environment for Citizen Engagement***

While NSAs, and particularly CSOs, are independent and autonomous, they are not

development actors working in isolation<sup>61</sup>. Their capacities to effectively perform the roles outlined in the previous section and thus contribute to development are affected – and even limited- by the actions of other development actors, namely the state and more particularly, governments. In the words of Lester Salamon<sup>62</sup>: “*The evolution of the nonprofit sector in different countries can be significantly affected by the “favourability” or “unfavourability” of the framework within which nonprofit organizations operate*”. Comparative studies of legal and institutional environments for CSOs show that although other factors are also at work, the more favourable the operational framework is for non-profit action, the more highly developed the civil society sector is.

The 2008 *Accra Agenda for Action (AAA)*<sup>63</sup> committed all government signatories to “ensuring that CSO contributions to development reach their full potential”. To this end, a number of conditions and standards are necessary, particularly when it comes to the “health” of the enabling environment in which CSO and –more generally NSAs, operate and evolve. In other words, when thinking of citizen engagement it is important to assess how enabling (un-enabling) the environment is to assist (hinder) the functioning of the CSO/NSAs in promoting the interests of the poor.

In the framework of the Open Forum for CSO Development Effectiveness, **enabling standards** have been described as: “...a set of interrelated conditions –such as legal, bureaucratic, fiscal, informational, political, and cultural – that impact on the capacity of CSO development actors to engage in development processes in a sustained and effective manner.” Recently, also the OECD-DAC has set up a multi-stakeholder working stream<sup>64</sup> on the topic of enabling environment. Most recently, UNDESA/DPADM has launched a new online tool UNPACS (United Nations Public Administration Country Studies, available at <http://www.unpan.org/unpacs>), that provides short and easily accessible assessments on the degree to which the constitutions of all 192 UN Member States enable citizen engagement and non-state actor actions.

**Table 22: Enabling standards that are a precondition for a robust and effective civil society**

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<sup>61</sup> Open Forum country and sectoral consultations: a synthesis of outcomes. Towards a framework for CSO development effectiveness. Prepared by Brian Tomlinson & Rose Wanjiru. September 2010.

<sup>62</sup> Lester Salamon, Stefan Toepler, "The Influence of the Legal Environment on the Development of the Nonprofit Sector", Working Paper Series No. 17, Johns Hopkins University Institute for Policy Studies, 2000, page 23, <http://www.jhu.edu/~ccss/pubs/ccsswork/>.

<sup>63</sup> The AAA is the outcome document of the third High Level Forum (HLF-3) on Aid Effectiveness that took place in Accra, Ghana, in September 2008. The objective of this HLF was to assess progress on the commitments and targets of the Paris Declaration (PD). However, the agenda for the HLF-3 went beyond the PD to begin to introduce new issues into the debate on aid effectiveness, such as for instance democratic space, division of labour, South/South co-operation, Civil Society Organisations (CSO) as development actors, and conditionality. The AAA was negotiated between donors, multilateral organisations and recipient governments. Unlike at the HLF-2 in Paris, →CSOs played significant roles in advocating for deepening the aid effectiveness agenda. CSO participation was guided by a parallel CSO Forum attended by more than 600 CSOs. <http://www.accrahlf.net/>

<sup>64</sup> In April 2009, the *Work Stream on Civil Society development Effectiveness and Enabling Environment* was established in response to one of the final recommendations made to the OECD/DAC Working Party on Aid Effectiveness (WP-EFF), by the Advisory Group on Civil Society and Aid Effectiveness (AG-CS).

#### Enabling standards that are a precondition for a robust and effective civil society<sup>65</sup>

- **Freedom of association:** Individuals have the right to freely establish, join and participate in CSOs in order to pursue a broad range of public interest activities and goals, including the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms. Freedom of association includes the right to form an organization as a legal entity.
- **Legal recognition of CSOs:** CSOs must be able to create legal status through a process that is accessible, clear, inexpensive, timely and apolitical. The determination of legal status must be guided by objective and fairly administered standards.
- **The right to freedom of expression:** Pluralism, access to information and the right to dissent are essential characteristics of a democratic society and development effectiveness. CSOs must have legal protection and recourse to speak critically against government laws or practices and draw attention to abuses of human rights. States should refrain from laws that restrict freedom of expression through vague or overly broad regulatory language.
- **The right to operate free from unwarranted state interference:** Interference by states can only be justified where explicitly necessary in a democratic society and prescribed by law. States have the obligation to ensure that all laws and regulations are implemented in an apolitical, consistent and transparent manner. Dissolution of a CSO must be guided by objective standards and free of arbitrary decision-making.
- **The right to seek and secure resources:** All civil society organizations must be able to seek and secure funding from legal sources including individuals, businesses, other CSOs, international organizations, local, national and foreign governments.

Above all, a **functioning legal and institutional framework that ensures the right to organize, the right to expression and information, and the right to participate in public affairs** remains the primary responsibility of the state<sup>66</sup>, as enshrined in the United Nations International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and other multilateral and regional treaties. The openness of the states to engage with NSAs, the transparency and accountability with which information is shared, and the NSA community's own collective mechanisms for self-monitoring, accountability and collaboration, are equally crucial elements<sup>67</sup>.

#### *Freedom of expression and of association in International treaties and conventions*

Freedom of expression and of association are two fundamental human rights, recognised in the major International human rights treaties and conventions which derive from the UN Charter<sup>68</sup>, namely the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)<sup>69</sup>, and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)<sup>70</sup>. Of utmost importance is also the European Convention of Human Rights (ECHR)<sup>71</sup>.

<sup>65</sup> The organization and presentation of these principles is derived from "International Principles Protecting Civil Society", in *Defending Civil Society*, A Report of the World Movement of Democracy, February 2008, accessed at [www.wmd.org/projects/defending-civil-society](http://www.wmd.org/projects/defending-civil-society). Open Forum country and sectoral consultations: a synthesis of outcomes. Towards a framework for CSO development effectiveness. Prepared by Brian Tomlinson & Rose Wanjiru. September 2010.

<sup>66</sup> Advisory Group on Civil Society and Aid Effectiveness. Issues paper. Final Sept. 17, 2007. Consult the extranet site (<http://web.acdi-cida.gc.ca/cs>) for the most recent version.

<sup>67</sup> "Preliminary wrapping-up document. Working Groups 1 & 2". Structured Dialogue. December 2010. [https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/aidco/index.php/SD:\\_Wrap-up\\_session\\_EDD](https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/aidco/index.php/SD:_Wrap-up_session_EDD)

<sup>68</sup> In particular its preamble and articles 1, 55 and 56. The text is available at: <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/index.shtml>

<sup>69</sup> Available at <http://www.unhchr.ch/>

<sup>70</sup> Available at <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/cescr.htm>

<sup>71</sup> Available at <http://human-rights-convention.org/>

Furthermore, and regarding specific sectors and/or collectives, there are UN treaties dealing with discrimination in respect of gender, ethnicity, the Convention of the Rights of the Child, the Convention against Torture, and Conventions concerned with refugees and citizenship. The UN treaty obligations are further complemented by regional human rights systems.

**Table 23: International recognition of freedom of expression and of association<sup>72</sup>**

UDHR	<p><b>Article 19</b> Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.</p> <p><b>Article 20</b> 1. Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association. 2. No one may be compelled to belong to an association.</p>
ICCPR	<p><b>Article 19</b> 1. Everyone shall have the right to hold opinions without interference. 2. Everyone shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of his choice. 3. The exercise of the rights provided for in paragraph 2 of this article carries with it special duties and responsibilities. It may therefore be subject to certain restrictions, but these shall only be such as are provided by law and are necessary: (a) For respect of the rights or reputations of others; (b) For the protection of national security or of public order, or of public health or morals.</p> <p><b>Article 21</b> The right of peaceful assembly shall be recognized. No restrictions may be placed on the exercise of this right other than those imposed in conformity with the law and which are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security or public safety, public order, the protection of public health or morals or the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.</p>
ICESCR	<p><b>Preamble</b> Recognizing that, in accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the ideal of free human beings enjoying freedom from fear and want can only be achieved if conditions are created whereby everyone may enjoy his economic, social and cultural rights, as well as his civil and political rights.</p> <p><b>Article 8</b> 3. Nothing in this article shall authorize States Parties to the International Labour Organisation Convention of 1948 concerning Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize to take legislative measures which would prejudice, or apply the law in such a manner as would prejudice, the guarantees provided for in that Convention.</p>
ECHR	<p><b>Article 10</b> Everyone has the right to freedom of expression. This right shall include freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority.</p> <p>2. The exercise of these freedoms, since it carries with it duties and responsibilities, may be subject to such formalities, conditions, restrictions or penalties as are prescribed</p>

<sup>72</sup> Adapted from Public Oversight of the Security Sector. A Handbook for Civil Society Organizations. **Editors:** Eden Cole (DCAF), Kerstin Eppert (UNDP) and Katrin Kinzelbach. UNDO. 2008

by law and are necessary in a democratic society, in the interests of national security, territorial integrity or public safety, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals, for the protection of the reputation or rights of others, for preventing the disclosure of information received in confidence, or for maintaining the authority and impartiality of the judiciary.

**Article 11**

Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and to freedom of association with others, including the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests.

Of particular relevance to civil society organizations is the **UN Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms**<sup>73</sup>, which recognizes the right of individuals and CSOs to promote and campaign on human rights issues and urges states to adopt legislative, administrative and other steps to effectively guarantee these rights.

**Table 24: Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms**

<b>Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms</b>
Among the rights specified are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ The right to form, join and participate in non-governmental organizations, associations or groups to promote and protect human rights both at national and international levels (Article 5);</li><li>▪ The right for CSOs to participate in government and the conduct of public affairs, including, to submit to governmental bodies and agencies and organizations concerned with public affairs criticism and proposals for improving their functioning, and to draw attention to any aspect of their work that may hinder or impede the promotion, protection and realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms (Article 8);</li><li>▪ The right to complain about the policies and actions of individual officials and governmental bodies with regard to violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms, by petition or other appropriate means, to competent domestic judicial, administrative or legislative authorities or any other competent authority provided for by the legal system of the State (Article 9);</li><li>▪ The right, to participate in peaceful activities against violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms (Article 12).</li><li>▪ The Declaration recognizes the important role of NGOs in human rights education, training and research (Article 16).</li></ul>

***Towards a framework to assess the enabling environment for citizen engagement***

Five enabling elements appear to be of utmost importance in creating an enabling environment for citizen engagement at the national and local levels. They have an impact on **the capacity of CSOs and other development actors to engage in development policies, strategies and projects at the national and local level in a sustained and effective manner**. These are:

(A) Association: the freedom of citizens to associate;

<sup>73</sup> General Assembly Resolution 53/144, 8th March 1999, available at [http://www.unhchr.ch/huridocda/huridoca.nsf/\(symbol\)/a.res.53.144.en](http://www.unhchr.ch/huridocda/huridoca.nsf/(symbol)/a.res.53.144.en)

- (R) Resources: Their ability to mobilize financial resources to fulfil the objectives of their organizations;
- (V) Voice: their ability to formulate, articulate and convey opinion;
- (I) Information: their access to information (necessary for their ability to exercise voice, engage in negotiation and gain access to resources) and;
- (N) Negotiation: the existence of spaces and rules of engagement for negotiation and public debate.

This ARVIN acronym, developed by the World Bank’s Social Development Department, synthesizes the complexity of multiple conditions that affect the ability of civil society organizations and governments to engage in public debate and in systems of social accountability, as shown in the table below <sup>74</sup>.

**Table 25: The ARVIN Framework for Assessing the Enabling Environment for Civic Engagement**

	<b>Legal and Regulatory Framework</b>	<b>Political and Governance Context</b>	<b>Socio-Cultural Characteristics</b>	<b>Economic Conditions</b>
<b>Association</b>	Freedom of Association	Recognition and accreditation policies and procedures	Social capital Gender barriers Illiteracy	Cost of legal registrations and accreditations Cost of convening meetings and forums
<b>Resources</b>	Tax systems, fund raising and procurement regulations	Government grants, private funds, contracting, other transferences	Social philanthropy (the culture of giving) History of associational life, Self-help and gap-filling	Size of and stresses in the economy unemployment Impact of economy on contribution by members Infrastructure and cost of communications
<b>Voice</b>	Freedom of expression. Media and ICT related laws	Political control of public media.	Communication practices (use of media by different social groups)	Fees associated with expressing views in media (ads vs. op-ed) Costs to present/publish/distribute views (petitions, newsletters, radio stations)
<b>Information</b>	Freedom of information. Rights to access public information	Information disclosure policies and practices. Ability to demystify public policy and budgets	Information networks, Illiteracy The use of word of mouth	Costs/fees for access to information
<b>Negotiation</b>	Legally	Political will.	Social values and	Bargaining power

<sup>74</sup> Enabling Environments for Civic Engagement in PRSP Countries. Social development notes. Note No.82 March 2003.

	established dialogue spaces (referendums, lobby regulations, public forums, etc.)	Institutionalized dialogues and social accountability mechanisms. Parliaments', and local and national governments' capacities to engage	hierarchies that set who can speak on what subject in what context and when	Impact of economic constraints on autonomy and advocacy
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## Chapter 8. International Efforts and Commitments Towards Citizen Engagement and the Millennium Development Goals

As outlined in the preceding chapter, in evaluating the implementation of development targets such as the MDGs, a consensus is emerging on the need for more inclusive approaches to development. These involve the engagement of all relevant stakeholders throughout the public policy forming cycles in the decision-making processes that have an impact on social services and pro-poor development<sup>75</sup>.

In 2005, the UN World Summit<sup>76</sup> acknowledged that good governance and the rule of law cut across the whole range of internationally agreed development commitments and objectives, including the Millennium Development Goals. Along these lines, the Economic and Social Council further reinforced the imperative to “*deepen the participatory processes of government to ensure citizens’ engagement to achieve internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration*”<sup>77</sup>.

Five years later, in September 2010, the UN MDG Summit<sup>78</sup> re-confirmed the key role of participatory governance in the path towards achieving the MDGs.

**Table 26: Citizen Engagement in the “Draft outcome document of the High-level Plenary Meeting of the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals”**

**Citizen engagement in the Outcome document of the UN MDG Summit “Keeping the promise: united to achieve the Millennium Development Goals”<sup>79</sup>**

<sup>75</sup> *Participatory Governance and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)*. Publication based on the Expert Group Meeting on Engaged Governance: Citizen Participation in the Implementation of the Developmental Goals including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), 2006. New York. UN 2008.

<sup>76</sup> <http://www.un.org/summit2005/>

<sup>77</sup> Economic and Social Council resolution 2005/55.

<sup>78</sup> High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly at the sixty-fourth General Assembly session (or the MDG Summit), was held in New York, 20-22 September 2010.

<sup>79</sup> This table contains the paragraphs extracted from the MDG outcome document (A/65/L.1) which are relevant to citizen engagement. <http://www.un.org/en/mdg/summit2010/pdf/mdg%20outcome%20document.pdf>

23. We take note of the lessons learned and successful policies and approaches in the implementation and achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and recognize that with increased political commitment these could be replicated and scaled up for accelerating progress, including by:

- (a) Strengthening national ownership and leadership of development strategies;
- (b) Adopting forward-looking, macroeconomic policies that promote sustainable development and lead to sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth, increase productive employment opportunities and promote agricultural and industrial development;
- (c) Promoting national food security strategies that strengthen support for smallholder farmers and contribute to poverty eradication;
- (d) Adopting policies and measures oriented towards benefiting the poor and addressing social and economic inequalities;
- (e) Supporting participatory, community-led strategies aligned with national development priorities and strategies;**
- (f) Promoting universal access to public and social services and providing social protection floors;
- (g) Improving capacity to deliver quality services equitably;
- (h) Implementing social policies and programmes, including appropriate conditional cash-transfer programmes, and investing in basic services for health, education, water and sanitation;
- (i) Ensuring the full participation of all segments of society, including the poor and disadvantaged, in decision-making processes;**
- (j) Respecting, promoting and protecting all human rights, including the right to development;
- (k) Increasing efforts to reduce inequality and eliminate social exclusion and discrimination;**
- (l) Enhancing opportunities for women and girls and advancing the economic, legal and political empowerment of women;
- (m) Investing in the health of women and children to drastically reduce the number of women and children who die from preventable causes;
- (n) Working towards transparent and accountable systems of governance at the national and international levels;**
- (o) Working towards greater transparency and accountability in international development cooperation, in both donor and developing countries, focusing on adequate and predictable financial resources as well as their improved quality and targeting;
- (p) Promoting South-South and triangular cooperation, which complement North-South cooperation;
- (q) Promoting effective public-private partnerships;
- (r) Expanding access to financial services for the poor, especially poor women, including through adequately funded microfinance plans, programmes and initiatives supported by development partners;
- (s) Strengthening statistical capacity to produce reliable disaggregated data for better programmes and policy evaluation and formulation.

In recognition of this need and in the context of deepening citizen engagement in attaining good governance, the Division for Public Administration and Development Management (DPADM/UNDESA) has contributed in the past years with research, publications, technical advice and capacity building activities on the broad field of citizen engagement and public administration, highlighting aspects such as “engaged governance<sup>80</sup>”, voice, empowerment, inclusion, and deliberation, among others.

In 2007, the UN Committee of Experts on Public Administration (CEPA)<sup>81</sup> selected participatory governance the priority of its annual session, in the light of the increasing

<sup>80</sup> The term introduced by UNDESA is being advanced as a *normative rather than ad hoc approach to mainstream citizens at all levels of governance, legislative, as well as executive*, to ensure inclusiveness in decision-making and to support the implementation of the MDGs in an accountable manner

<sup>81</sup> The United Nations Committee of Experts on Public Administration, established by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in its resolution 2001/45, is comprised of 24 members who meet annually at UN Headquarters in New York. The Committee is responsible for supporting the work of ECOSOC concerning the promotion and development of public administration and governance among Member States, in connection with the UN Millennium Development Goals. [www.unpan.org/cepa](http://www.unpan.org/cepa)

importance of good governance and participation to Member States for reaching the internationally agreed development goals. The Committee developed a note, which sets the parameters for the Committee's debate and poses some questions for identifying policy options and recommendations available to Member States, based on its assessment of the impact of participatory governance and citizen engagement<sup>82</sup>.

Also in 2007, DPADM developed a toolkit on civic engagement on public policies, aimed at providing CSOs with guidance and step by step approaches on successful methods, mechanisms and processes for effective social mobilization, dialoguing, brainstorming, formulating, implementing, monitoring and evaluating programmes in public sector<sup>83</sup>.

In 2008, as an output to the Expert Group Meeting organized by UNDESA on Engaged Governance, in November 2006, the Division issued a publication on *Participatory Governance and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)*<sup>84</sup>, which covers topics such as the pre-conditions for effective participation, the impacts of engaged governance and civil society participation, the efficacy of community engagement in the attainment of the MDGs, and the lessons learned from case studies in community participation.

In 2010, DPADM organised a workshop in connection with the United Nations Public Service Day and Forum 2010 to address policies, strategies, practices and tools for public administrations to promote citizen engagement in development management to achieve the MDGs<sup>85</sup>.

**Table 27: Workshop on Engaging Citizens in Development Management and Public Governance for the Achievement of the MDGs, June 2010, Barcelona, Spain**

<b>Workshop on Engaging Citizens in Development Management and Public Governance for the Achievement of the MDGs, June 2010</b>
<p>The goal of the workshop was to address policies, strategies, practices and tools for public administrations to promote citizens' engagement in development management, with a particular focus on the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. The workshop explored policies, strategies, best practices and tools to promote the engagement of citizens in development management and public governance for the achievement of the MDGs by providing panel discussions, over two days, with key international citizens' engagement experts, as well as ample time for group discussions on innovative approaches, methodologies and tools, including e-Government tools.</p> <p>Three themes were discussed during the Workshop:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Approaches, Trends and Challenges in Citizens' Engagement for Development Management and Public Governance</li> <li>ii. Methodologies and Tools for Citizens' Engagement in Development Management and Public Governance</li> </ul>

<sup>82</sup> See: Participatory governance and citizens' engagement in policy development, service delivery and budgeting. Note by the Secretariat. Committee of Experts on Public Administration. Sixth session. New York, 10-13 April 2007, available at <http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/un/unpan025375.pdf>

<sup>83</sup> Available at : <http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/UN/UNPAN028366.pdf>

<sup>84</sup> Available at: <http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/UN/UNPAN028359.pdf>

<sup>85</sup> See more information, including all the presentations and the full Workshop report, at <http://www.unpan.org/ce>

iii. Innovations, Best Practices and Uses of ICT for Citizens' Engagement in Development Management and Public Governance

The event gathered 82 international experts, from 22 countries around the world, of various backgrounds: senior government and public administration officials, academics, civil society and private sector representatives, as well as United Nations and its network of agencies staff.

The outcome of the Public Service Day and Forum, the Barcelona Declaration, reaffirms the importance of citizen engagement in enhancing public services, and in achieving the MDGs:

**The Barcelona Declaration on “The Critical Role of Public Service in Achieving the Millennium Development Goals”**

12. The participants of the 2010 United Nations Public Service Day, Awards Ceremony and Forum on "The Critical Role of Public Service in Achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)" draw attention to this Declaration with the following recommendations;

- a. Development needs to be fostered by all stakeholders and governments shall **promote the engagement of the people**, organized civil society and private sector actors to jointly achieve better living conditions for all, sustainability, inclusion and equity, with special attention to the development needs of women, poor and marginalized groups and future generations;
- b. **Citizens' engagement has to be considered to accelerate the progress towards reaching the MDGs in the years ahead**, together with increasing investment resources, partnerships among international and domestic stakeholders and enhanced and innovating public administration;
- c. **Accountability needs to be emphasized in order to consolidate trust and make citizen engagement a useful and creditworthy process**. Knowledge sharing and the exchanges of good practices must be promoted to facilitate the efficient dissemination of practices, methodologies, institutions and mechanisms on citizens' engagement that countries may adapt to their specific context. The United Nations can well assist Member States by offering tools such as guidelines, training courses, ICT-based tools and other, to national and local governments, as well as to civil society organizations;

See more information, including the whole text of the Barcelona Declaration, at <http://www.unpan.org/ce>

## Chapter 9. Guiding Principles for Effective Citizen Engagement

In conclusion, as underlined throughout the guidelines, there are **no “blueprint “approaches on how to engage with citizens given that national contexts are simply**

**too different to allow for uniform approaches.** Hence an adequate reading of the contexts, perspectives and correlation of forces appears essential and *'no one size fits all'* can be advocated. Nonetheless, on the basis on both conceptual and empirical foundations, a number of **guiding principles can be drawn, with a view to implement effective multi-stakeholder dialogues:**

- (i) Bear in mind that **any public interest could be an object of citizen engagement.** Citizen Engagement must not however be **confused with citizen participation, nor end in mere bilateral relationships.**
- (ii) Understand that even though citizen engagement has outstanding virtues, both due to its intrinsic value and as a means to an end, **unintended consequences are also possible.** In certain circumstances, engagement may not be possible (particularly when citizens' rights are not firmly grounded); in others it may not be efficient, or even equitable;
- (iii) Ensure that **minimum engagement conditions are met** and that **ordinary citizens** are confident and empowered to contact and obtain responses from government agents, and have the possibility to lobby and/or demonstrate collectively.
- (iv) **Ensure political will and leadership to create change and genuine interest in the the citizens engagement process, and its themes and outcomes.** Even though it is recommended that governments take on the responsibility of convening dialogue processes for public policymaking, as they will be in charge of implementing such policies, **joint ownership** of the process (together with all involved stakeholders) needs to be developed;
- (v) When **the minimum engagement conditions** (including adequate information flows, structured mechanisms for engagement, functioning platforms to express citizens' voices, etc), are absent, **consider using other possibilities** to bring about these minimum conditions and make the case for citizen engagement (coalition building, intra-group dialogue, partial dialogue, etc);
- (vi) Ensure an adequate **degree of institutionalisation.** There must be procedures and forums, formal or informal, through which citizens can contribute with their perspectives, voice their concerns and have an effect on decisions that affect their lives;
- (vii) **Clearly differentiate** between **making commitments and making dialogue results binding,** as not all commitments can be legally binding and **ensure coherence throughout the different phases of the process,** from convening to implementation and follow up, through a **comprehensive design of the strategic route** and architecture of the process (including reporting mechanisms);
- (viii) **Establish clear objectives and results.** Casuistic dialogues, neither output-oriented nor related to concrete policy measures, should be avoided. In addition,

**clear and ethical rules of the game need to be established.** Otherwise, dialogues may generate dissatisfaction and undermine credibility;

- (ix) Be aware that engagement initiatives (particularly when they are of a multi-stakeholder nature) are successful when **different positions** -and sometimes even opposed positions and interests- are **brought together for a common goal**. Diversity leads to a better understanding of the complexities of the sector/topic at hand and allows for recognition of the areas of difference of opinion, while seeking ways to learn from one another;
- (x) **Hence, ensure inclusiveness**, a principle that may be expressed in a variety of ways: in terms of the values and perspectives that must be part of the process; in terms of gender balance; in terms of the inclusion of minorities and marginalised social groups; etc. Inclusiveness, however, doesn't come without challenges that come with dealing with the complexity of citizens and their demands and priorities;
- (xi) Also, **ensure representativeness**. A key element in obtaining results is that participants in a dialogue represent concrete sectors of the community/society, with specific perspectives and demands and that they are valid and representative interlocutors. Special attention needs to be paid in **reaching participants beyond the “usual suspects”** (those who participate repeatedly, volunteer and attend events and whose voices are heard loudly and clearly), **especially representatives of disadvantaged groups**;
- (xii) Understand **that different audiences require different approaches**. Stakeholders vary in their values, perspectives and ways of seeing the world. One should be careful to select an engagement architecture that respects the audience's sensibilities;
- (xiii) Do not consider **design, implementation and evaluation as detached and sequential stages** but rather as mutually dependent and intertwined activities, extending over the whole duration of the engagement process. Flexibility is thus required, as well as enough room to adapt the process and to test alternatives;
- (xiv) **Allow for sufficient engagement capacity of citizens to be built**. This is particular relevant for disadvantaged and socially excluded groups, that risk being excluded because of lack of knowledge and/or access to information, and physical and cultural distances to the decision-making centres;
- (xv) Make sure that **sufficient time is** available (to overcome the challenges of citizen engagement) and **ensure transparency and access to information**, through continuous feedback and reflection;
- (xvi) Ensure **adequate coordination across different government sections**, to guarantee policy coherence, avoid duplication, promote knowledge management and avoid the risk of “engagement fatigue”.

And last but not least, understand that citizen engagement **amounts to a real cultural revolution**. Decades of centralised top-down management cannot be erased with the stroke of a pen. Engagement is a **'new thing' for government officials**, but also for citizens and it will take time to adapt attitudes, roles and working methods to the requirements of participatory policy-making approaches.

## Annexes

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### Annex I

#### **Millennium Development Goals**

In September 2000 world leaders came together at United Nations Headquarters in New York to adopt the United Nations Millennium Declaration, committing their nations to a new global partnership to reduce extreme poverty and setting out a series of time-bound targets - with a deadline of 2015 - that have become known as the Millennium Development Goals. The MDGs provide a framework for the entire international community to work together towards a common end – making sure that human development reaches everyone, everywhere. If these goals are achieved, world poverty will be cut by half, tens of millions of lives will be saved, and billions more people will have the opportunity to benefit from the global economy.

#### Goal 1 Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

- Reduce by half the proportion of people whose income is less than \$1 a day.
- Reduce by half the proportion of people who suffer from hunger.

#### Goal 2 Achieve universal primary education

- Ensure that all boys and girls complete a full course of primary schooling.

#### Goal 3 Promote gender equality and empower women

- Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015.

#### Goal 4 Reduce child mortality

- Reduce by two thirds the mortality of children under-five.

#### Goal 5 Improve maternal health

- Reduce maternal mortality by three quarters.

#### Goal 6 Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases

- Halt and reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS.
- Halt and reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases.

#### Goal 7 Ensure environmental sustainability

- Integrate principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes; reverse the loss of environmental resources.
- Halve the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation
- Improve the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020

#### Goal 8 Develop a global partnership for development

- Develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system.

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- Address special needs of the least developed countries, landlocked countries and small island developing States.
  - Deal with developing countries' debt.
  - In cooperation with developing countries, develop and implement strategies for decent work for youth.
  - In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications.

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## **Annex II**

### **GLOSSARY**

#### ***The Accra Agenda for Action (AAA)***

The AAA<sup>i</sup> is the outcome document of the third High Level Forum (HLF-3) on Aid Effectiveness that took place in Accra, Ghana, in September 2008. The objective of the High Level Forum was to assess progress on the commitments and targets of the Paris Declaration (PD)<sup>i</sup>.

#### ***Accountability***

Accountability is a concept in ethics and governance with several meanings. It is often used synonymously with such concepts as responsibility, answerability, blameworthiness, liability, and other terms associated with the expectation of account giving.

*Vertical accountability* describes accountability between people with an unequal power relationship. Accountability is meant to flow either top-down or bottom-up. In representative democracies, elections are the most important channel of institutionalized bottom-up vertical accountability. In addition, citizens can hold the powerful to account through more informal processes such as organizing themselves into associations and lobbies and through negative publicity. Bureaucratic accountability is an example of top-down accountability in which higher-ranking public officials hold their subordinates accountable.

*Horizontal accountability* describes accountability between those with an equal power relationship: it refers to somebody holding someone else of roughly equal power accountable, usually through formal relationships within the state. In democratic theory, the division of powers –the executive, legislative, and judiciary constraining each other through “checks and balances”- represents its prototypical expression<sup>i</sup>.

#### ***Civic engagement***

Civic Engagement can be described as the set of individual and collective actions

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designed to identify and address issues of public concern. It can take many forms, from individual volunteerism to organizational involvement to electoral participation<sup>1</sup>.

### ***Civic Dialogue***

Participation of people in public discussions on civic issues, policies or decisions that affect their lives, communities and society. Meaningful dialogue is intentional and purposeful. Dialogue organizers have a sense of what difference they hope to make through civic dialogue and participants are informed about why the dialogue is taking place and what may result. Civic dialogue works toward common understanding through an open-ended discussion. It engages multiple perspectives on an issue, including potentially conflicting and unpopular ones, rather than promoting a single point of view.

### ***Civil society and Civil Society organization***

The concept of civil society encompasses a wide range of voluntary associations and informal networks in which individuals and groups engage in activities of public consequence. In a broad sense, it includes all non-market and non-state organizations and structures in which people organize to pursue shared objectives and ideals. In development policy, there has been a tendency to think primarily in terms of non-governmental organizations whose missions are explicitly and uniquely developmental in character. However, civil society also includes farmers' associations, professional associations, community-based organizations, environmental groups, independent research institutes, universities, faith-based organizations, labour unions, and not-for-profit media, as well as other groups that do not engage in development work. This broad definition is nowadays widely accepted among development practitioners<sup>1</sup>.

### ***Community engagement***

Community engagement is considered to be a function of the government. It refers to the many ways in which governments connect with citizens and stakeholders in the development and implementation of policies, programs and services<sup>1</sup>.

### ***Consensus Building***

The process of developing shared understanding and/or agreement among dialogue participants. It often results from open communication, reflection and understanding among participants, who find empathy for others' realities and identify converging ideas and purposes<sup>1</sup>.

### ***Consultation***

Consultation is a process that facilitates the receipt of feedback and input on an issue. There are two key roles in any consultation: those requesting the input (the host) and those providing the input (the participant). Key elements of consultation are: 1) It is a process, not an outcome; 2) it impacts decisions through influence, rather than power; 3) it is about inputs into decision-making, not joint decision-making or decision-making by referendum<sup>1</sup>.

### ***Deliberation***

Deliberation comes from the Latin term 'delibero' ('I consider, weigh well'). Deliberation is the kind of reasoning and weighing of options a person does prior to

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making a decision. At the heart of deliberation are weighing possible actions and decisions carefully by examining their costs and consequences in light of what is most valuable to us. Deliberation can take place in any kind of conversation—including dialogue, debate and discussion.

Deliberative democracy rests on the core notion of citizens and their representatives deliberating about public problems and solutions under conditions that are conducive to reasoned reflection and refined public judgment; a mutual willingness to understand the values, perspectives, and interests of others; and the possibility of reframing their interests and perspectives in light of a joint search for common interests and mutually acceptable solutions<sup>1</sup>. Deliberative Democracy is “decision making by discussion among free and equal citizens. The idea that democracy revolves around the transformation rather than simply the aggregation of preferences”<sup>1</sup>.

### ***Deliberative Dialogue***

The process of dialogue, as it is usually understood, can bring many benefits to civic life – an orientation toward constructive communication, the dispelling of stereotypes, honesty in relaying ideas, and the intention to listen to and understand the other. A related process, deliberation, brings a different benefit – the use of critical thinking and reasoned argument as a way for citizens to make decisions on public policy. Deliberative dialogue combines these two processes in order to create mutual understanding, build relationships, solve public problems, address policy issues, and to connect personal concerns with public concerns<sup>1</sup>.

### ***Democracy***

There are multiple discussions on the definition of democracy and also several varieties of democracy. However, at its core democracy is a form of government in which governing power is derived from the people (Greek term ‘*dēmokratía*’ refers to ‘rule of the people’). For the purpose of these guidelines, democracy can be understood as a form of government where a constitution guarantees personal and political rights, fair and free elections, and independent courts of law. Democracy stands in opposition to the concept of a totalitarian regime, which refers to a form of government that subordinates the individual to the state and strictly controls all aspects of life by coercive measures.

### ***Democratic Governance***

This concept refers to a shift from citizens as simply voters, volunteers and consumers to citizens as problem solvers; a shift from public leaders as service providers to public leaders as partners and catalysts for citizen action. A shift from democracy as a series of elections to a society that tackles problems collaboratively that cannot be solved either without government or by government alone.

### ***Democratization***

Democratization is the process of transition towards a more democratic political regime. This process is measured by a series of principles including popular control, rule of law, political equality, a multi-party system, citizen participation and the existence of collectively binding decisions which formalize the establishment of a non-violent dialectic between the aspirations of the majority and those of a minority according to a

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body of rules accepted by all and based on respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms<sup>i</sup>.

### ***Development***

Development is the process through which societal changes are achieved to ensure people lead lives of dignity and are able to meet their daily needs and to reach their highest potential through addressing societal challenges such as poverty, injustices and imbalance of power<sup>i</sup>.

### ***Development Effectiveness***

Development effectiveness is promoting sustainable positive change, within a democratic framework, that addresses the causes as well as the symptoms of poverty, inequality and marginalization, through the diversity and complementarity of instruments, policies and actors. Civil society organizations (CSOs) have taken an important role globally in expanding and elaborating the concept of development effectiveness, including CSO development effectiveness, aiming to engage with donors and recipient governments in a more ambitious level of dialogue, with equal participation by all<sup>i</sup>.

### ***Dialogue***

Dialogue refers to spoken or written communication or exchange of ideas or opinions between two or more people. It is characterized by participants exchanging information, sharing experiences, honestly expressing perspectives, clarifying viewpoints, and developing solutions. The goal of dialogue is to deepen understanding, and to think about ways to make a difference on an issue. This is more likely to occur in a safe, focused discussion when people exchange views freely and consider a variety of views<sup>i</sup>. In dialogue, the intention is not to advocate but to inquire; not to argue but to explore; not to convince but to discover<sup>i</sup>.

### ***Digital Divide***

The digital divide refers to the disparity in access to technology between and within countries. This gap pertains to items such as personal computers and Internet access, but also includes simpler technologies like telephones and mobiles.

### ***Enabling Environment for Civil Society***

A functioning legal and judicial system that ensures the right to organize, the right to expression and information, and the right to participate in public affairs is an important part of an enabling environment for the civil society. The rights of CSOs to operate and function freely can be defended on the basis of governments' obligations to protect and promote the rights of expression, peaceful assembly and association, amongst others, as guaranteed under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and other multilateral and regional treaties<sup>i</sup>.

### ***Engaged Governance***

Engaged Governance refers to an institutional arrangement that links people more directly to the decision-making processes in a manner that does not by-pas the representational democracy but complements it so as to enable them to influence the

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public policies and programs in a manner that impacts more positively on their social and economic lives<sup>1</sup>. It is a normative rather than ad hoc approach to mainstreaming citizen engagement at all levels of governance, legislative, as well as executive, to ensure inclusiveness in decision-making and to support the implementation of the MDGs in an accountable manner.

### ***Facilitator***

A facilitator is an individual whose job is to help to manage a process of information exchange. While an expert's role is to offer advice, particularly about the content of a discussion, the facilitator's role is to help with *how* the discussion is proceeding. In short, the facilitator's responsibility is to address the journey, rather than the destination<sup>1</sup>.

### ***Gender Equality***

Gender equality refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys. Gender equality implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration in policy-making, recognizing the diversity of different groups of women and men<sup>1</sup>.

### ***(Good) Governance***

Governance refers to the rules, processes, and behavior by which interests are articulated, resources are managed, and power is exercised in society. The way public functions are carried out, public resources are managed and public regulatory powers are exercised is the major issue to be addressed in that context. In spite of its open and broad character, governance is a practical concept relating to the very basic aspects of the functioning of any society and political and social systems. It can be described as a basic measure of stability and performance. As the concepts of human rights, democratization and democracy, the rule of law, civil society, decentralized power sharing, and sound public administration gain more importance and relevance in a political system, governance evolves into democratic governance<sup>1</sup>.

### ***Horizontal governance***

Horizontal (or networked governance) refers to the process of governing that is ensured by public policy networks, including public, private and voluntary sector actors<sup>1</sup>.

### ***Human Rights***

Human rights are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated. While the significance of national and regional particularities and various historical, cultural and religious backgrounds must be borne in mind, it is the duty of States, regardless of their political, economic and cultural systems, to promote and protect all human rights and fundamental freedoms<sup>1</sup>.

### ***Mapping Study***

Governments and donors need to understand thoroughly the local civil society in order to engage with relevant actors at appropriate times. A mapping study helps in the identification of these actors since the understanding of stakeholders should not be limited only to the more well-known international NGOs but also include civil society

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groups at all levels (grassroots, intermediary, networks and platforms) whilst remaining aware of certain groups with particular knowledge and expertise within specific sectors<sup>1</sup>.

### ***Multi-stakeholder Processes***

This term describes processes that aim to bring together all major stakeholders in a new form of communication and decision-finding (and possibly decision-making) on a particular issue. These processes are based on principles of transparency, participation and equitable representation and aim to develop partnerships and strengthened networks between three or more stakeholders groups. They can comprise dialogues on policy or grow into consensus building, decision-making and implementation of practical solutions. They have emerged because there is a perceived need for a more inclusive, effective manner for addressing the urgent sustainability issues of our time<sup>1</sup>.

### ***Non State Actors (NSAs)***

The term Non State Actors (NSAs) is used to describe a range of organizations that bring together the principal, existing or emerging, structures of society outside the government and public administration. NSAs are created voluntarily by citizens, their aim being to promote an issue or an interest, either general or specific. They are independent of the State and can be profit or non-profit organizations. NSA is a broad concept that includes CSOs in all their forms, as well as private sector and economic partners<sup>1</sup>.

### ***Non-Governmental Organization (NGO)***

A non-governmental organization (NGO) is a non-profit, voluntary citizens' group that is organized on a local, national or international level. Task-oriented and driven by people with a common interest, NGOs perform a variety of service and humanitarian functions, make citizens' concerns heard by governments, advocate and monitor policies and encourage political participation through provision of information. Some are organized around specific issues, such as human rights, environment or health. NGOs provide analysis and expertise; serve as early warning mechanisms and help monitor and implement international agreements<sup>1</sup>.

### ***Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness***

The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness was agreed in March 2005 at the Second High Level Forum in Paris<sup>1</sup>. It was a landmark achievement for setting out an agreement between donors and recipient governments based on five principles (ownership, alignment, harmonization, managing for results, and mutual accountability) and shared commitments to improve aid effectiveness. The underlying intention was to reform the delivery and management of aid in order to improve its effectiveness. The reforms are intended to “*increase the impact of aid [...] in reducing poverty and inequality, increasing growth, building capacity and accelerating the achievement of the MDGs*”<sup>1</sup>.

### ***Participatory Budgeting***

In a participatory budgeting process citizens decide how to allocate part of a municipal or public budget. Participatory budgeting allows citizens to identify, discuss, and prioritize public spending projects. In a participatory budgeting process forums are held throughout the year so that citizens have the opportunity to allocate resources, prioritize broad social policies, and to monitor public spending. These

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programs are designed to incorporate citizens into the policymaking process, spur administrative reform, and distribute public resources to low-income neighborhoods. Participatory budgeting promotes social and political exclusion as low income and excluded actors are given the opportunity to make policy decisions<sup>1</sup>.

### ***Participatory Development***

Differences in definitions and methods aside, common agreement exists on what constitutes authentic “participation” in development. Participation refers to involvement by local populations in the creation, content and conduct of a program or policy designed to change their lives. Participatory approach to development requires recognition and use of local capacities and avoids the imposition of priorities from the outside. It increases the odds that a program will be on target and its results will more likely be sustainable. Ultimately, participatory development is driven by a belief in the importance of entrusting citizens with the responsibility to shape their own futures<sup>1</sup>.

### ***Participatory Governance***

Participatory governance refers to the system of decision-making and administration in which those who might be affected by the decisions and administration ("stakeholders") have more opportunities than usual to state their views and lobby for their interests. Such participation may be formalized through a regular system of consultations<sup>1</sup>.

Participatory governance draws on insights from political and institutional economics and from experiments promoted by social activists. It represents a paradigm shift which has the potential to overcome political obstacles by building and harnessing the capacities of the poor themselves for the design of more effective policies of poverty reduction and their implementation in more efficient and therefore sustainable ways<sup>1</sup>.

### ***Pro-Poor Policy***

The United Nations' Millennium Declaration places poverty reduction at the center of the development process. It is, therefore, essential to search for national development strategies, pro-poor policies, that promote secure, sustainable and equitable human development and that empower people. In the Millennium Declaration adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 2000, more than 190 heads of state or government pledged their commitment to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). First among these goals is reducing the incidence of global poverty by half (compared to the 1990 level) by the year 2015. Other goals such as the elimination of hunger, universal access to primary education, mortality reduction, and gender equality, all essentially support the goal of reducing poverty<sup>1</sup>.

### ***Public Administration Reform***

Public administration reform is the search for public service organizations that respond to the needs of citizens and deliver appropriate public goods and services efficiently and impartially, including macro-economic and public policy formulation, definition and implementation. Sufficient checks on these organizations make them more accountable

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and transparent to the public, thereby reducing possibilities of corruption and increasing trust in them and government at all levels<sup>1</sup>.

### ***Public Consultation***

Public consultation is a process involving interactive or two-way communication between a government and the public, through which both become informed about different perspectives on issues and proposals, providing the public with the opportunity to influence government decisions. A good public consultation program will result in decisions that are more sensitive and responsive to public concerns and values.

### ***Public Policies***

The term is used to describe the laws, decisions, regulations, etc. of a governmental body. A government's public policy is the set of policies (laws, plans, actions, behaviours) that it chooses. Since governments claim authority and responsibility (to varying degrees) over a large group of individuals, they see fit to establish plans and methods of action that will govern that society<sup>1</sup>.

### ***Rights-based Development***

A rights-based approach to development aims to transform the self-perpetuating vicious cycle of poverty, disempowerment and conflict into a virtuous cycle in which all people, as *rights-holders*, can demand accountability from states as *duty-bearers*, and where duty bearers have both the willingness and capacity to fulfill, protect, and promote human rights. A rights-based approach rejects the notion that people living in poverty can only meet their basic needs as passive recipients of charity. People are the active subjects of their own development, as they seek to claim their rights. Development actors, including the state, should seek to build people's capabilities to do so by guaranteeing their rights to the essentials of a decent life<sup>1</sup>.

### ***Right of Initiative***

The term refers to the notion of civil society organizations as development actors in their own right, whose scope and roles in development are distinct from that of governments and donors, and which constitute an essential feature of democracy, seeking to express peoples' organized action in the public sphere for public benefit and change<sup>1</sup>.

### ***Rule of Law***

A country can be said to operate under the rule of law when it has: (i) a legislature that adopts laws which respect the Constitution and human rights; (ii) an independent judiciary; (iii) effective, independent and accessible legal services; (iv) a legal system guaranteeing equality before the law; (v) a prison system respecting the human person; (vi) a police force at the service of the law; (vii) an effective executive which is capable of enforcing the law and establishing the social and economic conditions necessary for life in society, and which is itself subject to the law; and (viii) a military that operates to uphold the Constitution<sup>1</sup>.

### ***Social Capital***

Social capital has widely differing definitions. Some political scientists use the term as identical to the ideas of civil society and trust. To others, social capital has a

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different meaning. According to Robert Putnam (Bowling Alone, 1986), the term “refers to the collective value of all social networks and the inclinations that arise from these networks to do things for each other”. Social capital is thus seen as a key component to building and maintaining democracy as *the denser these networks, the more likely the members of a community will cooperate for mutual benefit*<sup>i</sup>. A more individualistic approach concept of social capital considers it as “investment in social relations with expected returns in the marketplace” (Nan Lin, Social Capital, 2001, Cambridge University Press). Social capital is also described as “the existence of a certain (i.e. specific) set of informal values or norms shared among members of a group that permit cooperation among them” (Francis Fukuyama)<sup>i</sup>.

### ***Social Cohesion***

Social cohesion is a term used in social policy, sociology and political science to describe the bonds or "glue" that bring people together in society, particularly in the context of cultural diversity. It refers to the processes of building shared values and communities of interpretation, reducing disparities in wealth and income, and generally enabling people to have a sense that they are engaged in a common enterprise, facing shared challenges, and that they are members of the same community<sup>i</sup>.

### ***Stakeholders***

People, groups or organizations who affects or will/may be affected by the outcome of a dialogue or public participation process.

### ***Transparency***

Transparency implies openness, communication and accountability. Transparent procedures include open meetings, financial disclosure statements, freedom of information legislation, budgetary review, audits, etc. In politics, transparency is introduced as a means of holding public officials accountable and to prevent corruption. A government can be considered as transparent when government meetings are open to the press and the public, when budgets and financial statements may be reviewed by anyone, when laws, rules and decisions are open to discussion.

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