

Accountability

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▶ Accountability:

“some actors have **the right to hold other actors to a set of standards, to judge whether they have fulfilled their responsibilities** in light of these standards, and **to impose sanctions** if they determine that these responsibilities have not been met”

- ▶ Sanctions can be more or less formal and meaningful
- ▶ Process can be more or less regulated and concrete

Accountability of who, to whom, for what?

- ▶ “Of who” - states, civil society organisations, partnerships, private sector, UN and EU entities
- ▶ “To whom” - to (other) states, citizens, organisations; ultimately to the world’s people?
- ▶ For what? - held to account for their fair share of implementation of the SDGs (including, establishing the right systems to implement and monitor)

Accountability needs, in order to flourish:

- ▶ Transparency
- ▶ Information and awareness
- ▶ Processes for representation of interests and issues
- ▶ Processes for dialogue and reason-giving
- ▶ Standards or responsibilities (widely understood and agreed)
- ▶ Some potential sanction - political, legal: regulation, reputation, disapproval.
- ▶ Ideally, entitlement to be heard and right to demand answers

... for the people to whom agents will be accountable.

States: (some initial thoughts)

► Standards:

Govt. commitments, national plans, human rights, existing int'l agreements, principles of SDGs

- Watch for EU complications

► At national level:

Parliamentary democratic structures, and existing/new SD bodies, will:

- Allow for sanctions (press, public opinion, pressure)
- transparency and access to information, forum for deliberation
- ideally, provide a participatory process that is SDG-focused (parliamentary committee, report), though likely to be 'silo'ed

► At global level:

- There will be yearly reports, supported by data on global SDG indicators
- An annual “High Level Political Forum” at the UN will report on themes, but also review country performance
- There may be a regional process; EU, UN-ECE
- Independent scrutiny can substitute for/help accountability at both levels

New partnerships: (first thoughts)

- ▶ Representation of stakeholders on governing bodies
- ▶ specific and measurable objectives; a “critical” baseline for assessment
- ▶ well-defined responsibilities and entitlements
- ▶ Publicity, transparency; regular communication of results, agendas, discussions
- ▶ regular independent reviews of progress

Two other resources:

- ▶ Language of partnership: mutual accountability between partners; “who counts” as being a partner?
- ▶ SDGs themselves address state governance, company reporting on sustainability standards

Setting up the “partnership of partnerships”

- ▶ harmonisations of aims, means and procedures (global partnership coherence for sustainable development)
- ▶ long term orientation - avoiding short term, “low hanging fruit”
- ▶ A patchwork of partnerships? danger of gaps and of repetition
- ▶ Shouldn't lose sight of the importance of people's participation and environmental sustainability, plus SDG commitments ('universality', 'leave no one behind', integration of environment and development)
- ▶ Setting the rules and requirements for private sector, third sector actors, to encourage SD-orientation: e.g. a chance to reinforce Ruggie principles on HR (private sector), sustainability reporting, and promote change within partners