



Permanent Mission of the
Republic of Bulgaria
to the United Nations



Is Civil Society Participation Shrinking after the Adoption of the 2030 Agenda?

Town hall-style discussion at the
President of General Assembly's High-level Thematic Debate on Human Rights

Tuesday, 12 July 2016, 1:15pm - 2:45pm, CR 5, UNHQ, New York

Opening remarks

Mr. Stavros Lambrinidis, EU Special Representative for Human Rights

The Rt Hon Baroness Anelay of St John's DBE, Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, UK

Ambassador Stephan Tafrov, Permanent Representative of Bulgaria to the UN

Panel

Salil Shetty, Secretary-General, Amnesty International

Colin Allen, Chair, International Disability Alliance

Andrew Hasset, Global Campaign Director, World Vision International Quinn

McKew, Deputy Executive Director, ARTICLE 19

Moderated by **Peggy Hicks, Director, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights**

Concept Note

One of the strengths of the process leading to the adoption of the ambitious 2030 Agenda was the active engagement and participation of civil society. We witnessed an inclusive, participatory and transparent process in which the UN and some Member States embraced and invited stakeholders to share their vision and knowledge to formulate a more sustainable future for all.

The success of the 2030 Agenda depends on an enabling environment, which provides opportunities for people to fully participate at the United Nations. A concerning trend is taking place in which stakeholders need to constantly argue their case to be allowed to participate or even to observe a proceeding. Moreover, at times stakeholders have been asked to summarize their interventions as a mere afterthought.

This side event provides the space to explore where we stand, eight months after the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, which is by the people, with the people and for the people. In addition, the side event will discuss expectations from civil society and Member States on ways to strengthen inclusion, participation and non-discrimination in relevant proceedings at the UN at all levels.

Main questions for discussion:

- **Is the UN system still open to include active civil society participation?**
- **Do Member States value and encourage input from civil society into processes?**
- **Is there risk that we are sliding backward to a UN in which Member States hide behind the General Assembly's rules of procedure and call for intergovernmental processes consequently excluding civil society?**

Main outcome of the event:

Representatives of diverse areas of civil society will argue that their participation and active contribution to UN processes will ensure that no one is left behind and that the human rights of all persons are upheld.