



african monitor

African voices for Africa's development



End of Year Narrative Report

Unlocking the African Moment:

From Voice to Influence to Action

March 2014 – February 2015

Prepared for the African Monitor Board of Trustees

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1. INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

The last quarter of FY 2014 (January – March 2015) started with high intensity as the intergovernmental negotiation processes on SDGs started in January. The start of the negotiations meant that discussion and influencing at various continental and global forums was once again open and accessible to the Voice Africa's Future community and other civil society. At country level, the campaign successfully achieved its objectives by conducting several high impact activities in all the six countries. There were 40 076 additional young people who endorsed the VAF petition, thus bringing to a total of 98 761 the number of signatures collected since the launch of the petition in June 2014. It is foreseen this momentum will continue in the coming two quarters until September 2015.

This report outlines the main activities conducted from December 2014 to March 2015.

2. ADVOCACY PROGRAMMES AND CAMPAIGNS

2.1. THE VOICE AFRICA'S FUTURE CAMPAIGN

2.1.1. ADVOCACY AT UNITED NATIONS LEVEL: THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL NEGOTIATIONS

2.1.1.1. Scoping overview and strategy for engagement

January 2015 marked the start of the intergovernmental negotiation process for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) among member states of the United Nations. As per directive from the UN General Assembly in September 2014, member states were to meet, discuss and agree on a negotiated global development agenda in monthly negotiation sessions until July 2015 – in preparation for the adoption of the SDGs by Heads of State in September 2015. Civil society was invited to seat as observers during the negotiations, with one morning dedicated as a civil society engagement opportunity each month.

African Monitor assessment of the state of play at the beginning of the year was that:-

- The OWG report was a delicate agreement, achieved through a tough compromise by member states. Its adoption during the 2014 UN General Assembly (UNGA) marked a significant gain; and statements by Member States made it clear that negotiations on the essence of the Goals and Targets would not be entertained – meaning no new issues would be introduced on the table. However, the status of key elements of the report would remain unclear until the intergovernmental negotiations begin. For instance, there was the possibility that Member States could subject all the Goals and Targets to a technical proofing process, which could mean significant changes to the outcome.
- The announcement that the intergovernmental negotiations would be open to civil society allayed fears that this process would be finalized behind closed doors. Furthermore, the appointment of the OWG co-Chairs as the co-Chairs for the intergovernmental negotiation process meant that civil society could count on a fairly friendly and inclusive process, as the co-Chairs had shown great leadership in this regard.
- The intergovernmental process would also focus on the development of the indicators, perhaps one of the most important aspects of the agenda. AM believed that the indicators would determine the level of ambition of the SDG agenda. Therefore it was critical to ensure that they measure what counts, and that new forms of measurement and data are considered as part of this new agenda. It was equally critical that a system for monitoring and evaluation was agreed and put in place for the SDGs.
- The intergovernmental negotiations were planned to take place over a period of 6 months; which meant that there was incredibly limited time for engagement, negotiations and finalization. These negotiations were taking place at the same time as three other critical negotiations were taking place at the UN, i.e. financing, climate and data. It was necessary for civil society to maintain focus on these negotiations as well as those on the SDG's, as they are all inter-related.

In response to the above assessment and scoping, African Monitor made a number of strategic decisions about its engagement with the SDG process, in order to clarify and focus its engagement in the process:-

- i. **Maintain focus on the intergovernmental negotiation process at the United Nations** in order to safe-guard key goals and targets that had already been secured through the OWG process, particularly Goals 1-5, 8-10, 16 & 17. Our tactic for engagement would be direct bilateral engagement with select members of the Africa Group throughout the period up to September 2015;

active participation in three to four intergovernmental negotiation sessions; and partnership with the UN Major Groups (Women, and Youth and Children).

- ii. **Invest in supporting the Africa Group technically**, especially in the process of developing indicators for key targets. Our tactic for engagement would be to build our on technical knowledge pool by developing indicators for select targets in order to share with member states; work in partnership with the Africa CSO Working Group on post-2015 to engage Member States; and where possible organize and/or participate in working sessions with African country representatives to workshop targets and indicators.
- iii. **Maintain at national and regional level a strong, vibrant, visible and youth-focused activism to maintain pressure on African governments to produce an ambitious and transformative global development agenda** in September 2015. Tactics for engagement included bilateral engagement with relevant national policy makers, youth mobilization and campaign activities.

2.1.1.2. Summary of activities and results

Three negotiation sessions have taken place in the months of January to March 2015, i.e. a Stock Taking session in January, negotiations on the Declaration in February, and negotiations on Targets and Indicators in March. During these sessions AM contributed by making written submissions to the United Nations on the Declaration, Targets and Indicators. An AM and AWG delegation also attended the negotiation session on Targets and Indicators, thereby interacting with various members of the Africa Group, G77 and European Union at the United Nations. In this March session, a member of the Africa CSO Working Group was nominated as one of the Civil Society speakers, calling for a high level of ambition in the SDGs. In the April session a Kenyan VAF youth champion has been selected as a speaker. This strategic meeting will be an opportunity for the VAF youth champion to call for the prioritization of youth development and empowerment in the post 2015 negotiations.

Summary of input, results and outcomes of these activities is below:-

- **Technical proofing of the OWG report:** The Stock-taking session reiterated that the OWG report would be used as the foundation for negotiations. There was suggestion for technical proofing of the of the SDG targets which faced resistance from most member states. This was reiterated both during February session on the Declaration and March session on Targets and Indicators by the G77 and China. In its statement the G77 stated that the “report of the Open Working Group on SDGs should not be re-opened for negotiations and must be

entirely integrated into the post-2015 development agenda including the chapeau, SDGs and targets and reservations made by Member States. The Group reaffirms its position as elaborated at the stock-taking session on the intergovernmental negotiations on the Post-2015 Development Agenda that it is opposed to 'technical proofing of the goals and targets' as it would lead to reopening the delicate political and substantive compromise reached at the OWG/SDGs." However, this view was not shared by the European Union, USA and Canada, all of whom supported the notion of technical proofing to ensure that the goals and targets align with previous commitments, are measurable and realistic. The compromise position reached in the last session (March) was that two criteria would be used for technical proofing, aligning proposed goals and targets with previous commitments, and putting dates in targets that did not have dates. Revised goals and targets will be presented in the April negotiation session.

- **Main-streaming youth issues in the SDG's:** While the Declaration rightfully gives attention to a number of key issues raised by civil society, it does not emphasize the main streaming of youth priorities; and the element of participation of the various population groups in economic, socials and political spheres is not adequately captured.
- **The Process of developing indicators:** Members of the UN have made it clear that the development of the indicators is a highly technical process that requires expert input. They have agreed to establish an intergovernmental expert team made up of national statistic offices, supported by an interagency expert team from the UN system to improve the proposed indicators and propose a new set by March 2016 through the ECOSSOC system. African Monitor has joined strong calls from civil society to ensure that broad consultation and participation of civil society is enabled in the development of indicators. The process of drafting the indicators for SDGs needs to be inclusive and participatory. A space has to be created for CSO and Youth and marginalised groups to be involved in the work of the Inter-agency Expert Group on the Sustainable Development Goals (IAG-SDGs) and the High-level group (HLG) that will provide strategic leadership for the SDG implementation process.
- **The Nature of Indicators:** The set of indicators submitted by the UN Inter-agency expert group were disappointing, and lacked the vision expressed in the goals and targets. This view was also expressed by member states, who agreed that they recognized proposed indicators only as a first draft. AM has called for a higher level of ambition in the nature of indicators, highlighting the following characteristics:

- Indicators need to sufficiently measure and closely align to underlying concept of targets. These processes must dictate the future data generation processes and introduce new purpose built indicators that can be included to country statistical systems.
- The indicators should be developed with an assumption of the wider public as the end user; therefore they must be clear and understood by all. It is preferable to measure targets with fewer indicators for two purposes (a) feasibility and cost effectiveness of frequent data collection by state and non-state actors, (b) to enhance communication between policy makers and their constituency.
- In line with the data revolution, the proposed indicators framework should allow for data which is readily accessible, standardized and comparable, utilising technology and innovations. It should allow CSOs and youth to be data generators, users and monitors of the SDGs.
- It is expected that the indicators developed to measure the SDGs will capture the essence of the goals and targets. AM is focused on African youth priorities, i.e. ending poverty, education, health, peaceful society and better governance and youth employment and access to economic opportunities. The mainstreaming of youth development needs to be reflected through the indicators. Thus, Indicators must allow demographic disaggregation to measure and track progress in all age groups.

2.1.2. FOCUSED AND TARGETED ADVOCACY AT COUNTY LEVEL

2.1.2.1. Bilateral Engagements with Political Heads and Policy Makers

African Monitor and its partners organized the following bilateral meetings:

- Bilateral meeting with the Commissioner for Youth in the Ministry of Youth, Women and Gender in **Uganda**. African Monitor staff and the VAF team met with the Commissioner for youth, who is in charge of youth affairs in the ministry. The main objective of the meeting was to advocate the Commissioner for the inclusion of a youth champion in the government delegation during the intergovernmental negotiations around the SDGs. Moreover the VAF delegation shared with the Commissioner the Key Asks and the youth petition. The Commissioner also shared the ministerial perspectives and expectations from the youth around the post 2015 negotiations and the SDGs. The Ugandan African Monitor team further engaged with the Ugandan government post 2015/SDGs negotiating team. The team attended the meeting with the government post2015/SDGs negotiating team as part of a coalition of Ugandan civil society organizations. The negotiators were happy to take copies of the Key Asks to inform their negotiations.
- Bilateral meeting with the **Burkina Faso** Minister of Youth: the VAF team met with the Minister of Youth to request for the inclusion of a youth champion in the government delegation at the UN intergovernmental negotiations. The Minister of Youth promised to engage the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, responsible for the post 2015, to consider the request.
- Bilateral meeting with the **Ethiopian** Ministry of Foreign Affairs: the VAF Country Coordinator met with the Ethiopian Minister of Foreign Affairs and briefed him about VAF, the Key Asks and the youth petition, and requested that a youth champion to be part of the government delegation at the intergovernmental negotiations. The Minister committed to explore the possibility of granting such request.
- The VAF team in **Kenya** has been engaging the Principal Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs requesting for youth accreditation in the government delegation during the intergovernmental negotiations. They have also been requesting for youth engagement in the planned consultations for 2015.

2.1.2.2. Youth Policy Dialogue

The VAF team in **Burkina Faso** organized a youth policy dialogue around the theme “Call for African Youth in the Post 2015 Development Process”. The main objectives of the meeting were:

- To engage and influence government position on the post 2015 agenda based on youth aspirations;
- To create a space and opportunity for the youth to interact with the newly appointed Minister of Youth, Training and Vocational Skills around the post 2015 development agenda;
- To popularize VAF and the Key Asks amongst the youth.
- To get the Minister endorsing the VAF petition.

During the dialogue the youth requested their government to prioritize the following in the post 2015 negotiations: 1) increase access to employment and economic opportunities for youth, 2) improve good governance at all levels and 3) promote peace and security across the globe and combat all forms of violence, especially violence against women and children.

The youth policy dialogue consisted of open debates and interactions between the Minister of Youth and the youth. The event was also attended by the Minister of Public Works and Employment; Special Adviser of the Minister of Education; UNAIDS Country Resident and 500 young people across Ouagadougou, mainly coming from different branches of ROJALNU and WAYN which are the main VAF partners in Burkina Faso. The VAF youth petition was read by a youth champion. There was also entertainment by the famous Musician local Alif Naba. The event was covered by the local media – print, radio and TV.

2.1.2.3. Stakeholder engagements and key meetings

African Monitor and the VAF teams organized and attended strategic meetings with key stakeholders in their respective countries, including:

- African Monitor staff and the VAF team in **Uganda** organized a dinner with representatives of 10 CSOs working on post 2015. The dinner meeting was an opportunity to galvanize efforts of CSOs around the post 2015 agenda and strengthen collaboration around the VAF initiative. The key outcome of meeting was a commitment from CSOs to mainstream the VAF initiative in all their activities and share the youth petition in their constituencies. VAF youth champions also participated in a public lecture called by the UNGA President H.E. Sam Kutesa, in

Uganda. The public lecture was a platform for dialogue and engagement between the UNGA President and Ugandan CSOs around the post 2015 negotiation processes. Over 600 people attended the event and the VAF youth champions were allowed to display the VAF key messages on the stage in the presence of the UNGA President.

- The VAF team in **Ethiopia** attended the Sub-Saharan Africa Grantees and Partners meeting organized by David and Lucile Packard Foundation to facilitate a platform for knowledge sharing and networking. In that event the VAF team was given a booth to promote its work. Copies of the VAF Key Asks and the youth petition were displayed and distributed to participants. Participants were also able to endorse the youth petition. The VAF team in **Ethiopia** also attended the UNAIDS' international conference held in Addis Ababa at UNECA complex with regards to reaching Zero Infection rate by 2030. The meeting was attended by ambassadors, representatives of several international and local NGOs, youth led and youth focused organizations and the media. One of the youth champions was a speaker and shared the youth voices as expressed in the VAF Key Asks.
- The VAF team in **South Africa** attended the South African CSOs Consultative Workshop on Post 2015 hosted by SALO in JHB. The VAF team used the opportunity to engage the delegates, especially the youth around the post 2015 agenda, the VAF Key Asks and the youth petition.
- An African Monitor VAF delegation attended the Action 2015 Assembly in Tunis. The main objectives of the Assembly was: 1) to reflect on overall campaign goal and objectives and recent campaign experiences at the national, regional and global levels, 2) share plans for upcoming mobilization and inspire for increased action on the road towards intergovernmental negotiations in Addis Ababa, New York and Paris, and 3) develop collaboration and plan for upcoming mobilization moments. The Ugandan VAF coordinator was one of the panellists at the Assembly. The meeting was a great opportunity to engage with various youth and civil society organizations, promote the VAF initiative, the Key Asks and the youth petition.

2.1.2.4. Youth outreach and mobilization to popularize the Key Asks & the Youth Petition

During the period under review, the youth champions across the six countries collected 40 076 signatures from youth who endorsed the VAF petition; thus bringing to a total of 98 761 the number of signatures collected since the launch of the petition in June 2014.

Signatures were collected at various events and activities (outreach, meetings, and rallies) organized at country level and in different areas, such universities, colleges, schools, communities, farm areas.

- The VAF team in **Uganda** organized the following activities with the aim to popularize the Key Asks and the VAF youth petition:
 - *Action 2015 launch:* the Ugandan VAF team coordinated the launch of Action 2015 in Uganda with the objective of popularizing the key asks and raising awareness of the youth around the post 2015 negotiation processes. The launch ceremony was attended by over 350 people; including 10 members of parliament who belong to the parliamentary caucus on post 2015; representative of the minister of foreign affairs; representatives of the Hon. Speaker of Parliament, representative of Minister of Youth and members of the National CSO working group on post2015. During the launch ceremony, a group of 15 year olds read the VAF petition. A 15 year old handed over the VAF petition and a booklet of the VAF Key Asks to the representative of the Minister of Foreign Affairs Hon. Sam Kutesa, who is also the current UNGA President. He then advocated the representative of the Minister of Foreign Affairs to prioritize youth issues as stated in the Key Asks in the post 2015 negotiation processes. Around 300 copies of the Key Asks were distributed.
 - *Students' debates:* the students' debates were organized at Makerere University in partnership with the Student Association and the United Nation Association of Uganda to engage students around the post 2015 negotiation processes and get the students to endorse the VAF petition.
 - *Outreach at Nkumba University:* VAF was introduced to Nkumba University for the first time and there was an excitement marked with sports activities after sharing VAF Key Asks and signing the VAF petition.
 - *Meeting with urban youth farmers' network:* the VAF team engaged the youth farmers around the post 2015 agenda, the Key Asks and VAF petition. Over 50 youth farmers endorsed the VAF petition.
- The Ethiopian team promoted the VAF youth petition at the Art exhibition that was organized by the Youth Empowerment Alliance. The majority of participants were youth; and the team managed to popularize the Key Asks and get the youth endorse the VAF petition. The team also collected the petition in 4 public high schools in Addis Ababa. The teachers within the 4 public high schools have been promoting the petition amongst their students and encouraged them to get involved in the post 2015 agenda.

- In Burkina Faso, the VAF local partners mainstreamed VAF initiative in all of their activities. They selected 20 of their volunteers to support the youth champions to popularize the Key Asks and collect the signatures in 13 provinces.
- The VAF team in South Africa organized a series of outreach activities in secondary schools and different communities to popularize the Key Asks and collected the signatures for the petition. A youth champion made a presentation at Kenneth Masekela High School, where she promoted the Key Asks and invited the learners to endorse the petition. The learners and the teachers were very welcoming and endorsed the VAF petition. At Ekhaya complex, which is a small mall in the township of Kwa-Thema, the VAF team popularized the VAF campaign and encouraged the youth to endorse the VAF petition. The team collaborated with Base Budget from Vosloorus to popularize the VAF campaign at the local schools and collect signatures for the youth petition. The team also popularized the VAF campaign at Thembelisha clinic during the HIV/AIDS campaign.
- The VAF Kenyan team organized outreach activities in several communities in Nairobi to popularize the Key Asks and signing of the petition; including during the World Aids Day, at the breakfast meeting on supporting meaningful youth engagement in post-2015 agenda, and at the National Forum on Post-2015 Agenda. They organized a Community Dialogue in Mathare North slums of Nairobi. The team also included the VAF Key Asks in the Action 2015 theme song, which was produced in partnership with Help Age. The song is produced in Swahili and is titled 'Hoja Zetu'. The song is accessible through this link: <https://soundcloud.com/george-ndungu-2/action-2015-kenya-theme-song>.
- The youth champions in Malawi have been popularizing the VAF initiative; the Key Asks and collected the signatures during Action 2015 events and activities organized in the country.

2.1.2.5. Online campaign

The team maintains online engagement with youth to trigger their views and thoughts around the post 2015 development agenda. WhatsApp, Facebook and Twitter accounts have been used to interact with the youth champions and youth in general. A VAF Instagram @VoiceAfricasFuture account has been established to engage with the global youth through pictures. The Instagram account is linked to the VAF Facebook page for more visibility.

Spotlight on South Africa: Impact through partnership

African Monitor campaign activities in South Africa and Uganda have been buttressed through a partnership with Action 2015, a global coalition aiming to mobilize global citizens to engage with the SDG process and campaign for a strong outcome in September 2015. As a member of this campaign, African Monitor is lead coordinator of national activities in South Africa and Uganda. Both countries are significant and strategic, South Africa as current coordinator of the G77 and Uganda as President of the UN General Assembly.

In South Africa, a series of activities have been held, all of which have drawn the attention of both the public, media and policy makers:

- The launch of Action 2015 campaign in Soweto in the presence of Minister Mbalula, and South African TV personality and celebrity guest, Boitumelo Thulo. 165 15-year-old kids attended from Naledi High (20), Dr. BW Vilakazi (71), Silver Oaks (15), iBongho High School (23), and Noordgesig Secondary School (36). The Minister addressed youth for 20 minutes, before doing live interviews with METRO FM and YFM; as well as interviews for SABC News and SABC TV News (the National Broadcaster), and Soweto TV. Boity Thulo and Siphe Magaga (youth rep.) also did interviews with all the media. 10 youths then took turns to address the Minister on their aspirations for the future.
- AM with the Action 2015 South African team organized a one month anniversary under the theme "Leave no one behind" at V&A Waterfront in Cape Town, with the aim to create awareness about the Action 2015 campaign; and to inspire others to join the cause and disseminate information about September 2015's UNGA and COP 21. A two group's flash mob of 15 year olds from township schools performed at the campaign event. 15 year old Linthle Mahloma said on this day February the 15th she has 15 wishes. In the next 15 years she want to live in a South Africa free from extreme poverty; where everyone has equal access to opportunity; and inequality, racism and xenophobia are reduced to its barest minimum.
- Over 200 people attended the International Women Day event organised in Johannesburg, for the launch of 'Poverty is Sexist'. It was organised by One supported by African Monitor, World Vision, UNASA and UN Women, as well as the Miriam Makeba Home for Girls, which offers refuge to abuse and vulnerable girls. The event was hosted by Penny Lebyane, host of popular ETV breakfast show 'Sunrise' and former presenter of women's welfare TV programme 'Motswako' on SABC 2.
- An Action 2015 panel discussion on the sustainable development goals and COP 21 was hosted at the University of Pretoria, 85 students from the University of Pretoria, University of Witwatersrand and University of Johannesburg attended, along with representatives from the United Nations Information Centre, Oxfam, One International, the South African Network on Inequality, and World Vision. The aim of the panel discussion was to create awareness about the SDGs to disseminate information about September 2015's UNGA and COP 21, and to empower youth leaders to participate in the Action2015 campaign and hold leaders accountable.

Impact on Participants and Target Audiences

Through the Action 2015 campaign we were able to popularize the SDGs in the country:

- Level of awareness was raised among youth participants present, and those who heard through the media, about the campaign and the post-2015 SDG agenda
- The presence of a Cabinet Minister shows that at the national government level this campaign is recognized and to certain level supported
- Action-2015 provided an opportunity for SA CSO's to work together on the post-2015 SDG agenda
- The interest of South African media on the campaign has been positive, as the coalition has been invited for follow up by various news channels.

2.1.3. THE AFRICA CSO WORKING GROUP – LEVERAGING THE VOICE OF AFRICAN CSO'S

2.1.3.1. AWG Strategy Session 2015

The Africa CSO Working Group on post 2015 held a strategy session to reflect on and plan for continued engagement in the SDG agenda for 2015. Over 30 participants met in Nairobi, Kenya to sharpen advocacy skills on post 2015, hosted by the Africa Platform (a member of the Africa CSO Working Group).

One of the reflections from this meeting was recognition from partners of the strategic and important role played by African Monitor as a coordinator of the network; as well as the increased impact and recognition that the Africa Working Group is receiving from the African Union and its member states both in Addis and in New York. The meeting also highlighted the importance of understanding politics at play especially in post 2015 negotiations.

The strategy session of the Africa CSO Working Group resolved to continue to work closely with the Africa Group in terms of the SDG track, and the AUC in terms of the Financing for Development track.

The successes of our African CSO network are currently being documented as a case study, where African Monitor provided the background information, processes and achievements to date of the Africa CSO Working Group.

2.1.3.2. AWG engagement with Permanent Representative Council ambassadors accredited to the African Union during the AU summit on 27-31 January 2015

Detailed discussions were held with selected Permanent Representative Council Ambassadors (PRCs)¹ (Rwanda, Uganda, Nigerian, Zambia, Zimbabwe) on the side-lines of the AU summit held 25-31 January 2015. Discussions were also held with key members of UNECA, UN, AU and others. The main objectives of the conversations were to establish the following:

¹ These are ambassadors accredited to the African Union and based in Addis Ababa. Addis Ababa posting is one of the most important diplomatic posting because of the African Union hence Addis controls the pulse of what happens in Africa and links with outside world.

- To understand how ready countries are to domesticate the post 2015 framework especially, with a focus on VAF priorities
- To evaluate the level of importance placed in the SDG process, especially in light of Agenda 2063; and to evaluate key areas of commonality and divergence
- To explore and negotiate a closer working relationship between AU organs, and CSO and youth groups

Key Milestones/Highlights:

Engagement with the PRCs revealed that:-

- On the whole, countries are not ready to implement and domesticate a post 2015 framework, and many have not begun to even develop strategies of how such domestication will be carried out. Most of the PRCs had a business as usual attitude, stating that they were "waiting" for the framework to be concluded and "come" to the national levels. They however pointed out that uncompleted MDGs need to be integrated into national development plans together with the post 2015 SDGs. Encouragingly, some of the PRCs emphasized the importance of entrenching governance in the post 2015 framework and pointed out that this is what will move Africa from its 3rd world status to 1st world status. They also indicated that most of the challenges being faced in Africa are governance related and this needs to be addressed. However this view was expressed by PRCs from the more liberal countries such as Nigeria.
- PRCs acknowledged the role of the Common Africa Position (CAP) in harmonizing the continental agenda with SDGs. However, they seem to take CAP as a static document and as the solution to interface between SDGs and Africa Agenda 2063. In relation to Agenda 2063, there is certainly an increasing sense that this should be the focus of policy efforts, as it addresses a broader scope of Africa specific challenges (e.g. Ebola) and aspirations. There is certainly a risk of fatigue and confusion between the SDG process and Agenda 2063.
- A number of PRCs and the other stakeholders pointed out that the biggest flaw of the post 2015 agenda is that after all the efforts and resources put into it, the framework is not binding and enforceable. They pointed out that the voluntary mechanisms are getting people fatigued. They therefore urged CSOs to work on developing and strengthening enforcement mechanisms at the local level to ensure that the framework is implemented. These enforcement mechanisms will draw from constitutions at the national level, National Development Plans, etc.

Overall, the interactions with the PRCs and other stakeholders pointed to more work needing to be done at the regional and national levels. It also points to the fact that at

national levels the emerging post 2015 framework is still being regarded as distant. What this means is that even after the post 2015 framework is finalized in September 2015, there is likely to be a period of inertia as countries seek to understand what this framework means for its national processes and programs. These findings may also point to the fact that not much consultation has taken place at national level about SDGs, even between government structures. Only elite ministries (Foreign Affairs, Planning and Finance) are likely to be more informed about it.

In terms of the VAF campaign, the following may need to be done;

- African Monitor and VAF champions need to develop, surface and strengthen enforcement mechanisms at national and regional level, and leverage on the signatures collected through the petition to push for inclusion and operationalization of youth issues at national level - linked to key priority sectors in the national development plans
- VAF should leverage on other economic and social processes such as the infrastructure development initiative or CAADP to locate post 2015 and push for its implementation within those policy frameworks.

2.1.3.3. AWG engagements at the AU African Ministers of Finance Meeting in Addis Ababa in March 2015

The African Regional Consultation toward the 3rd International Conference on FfD in July 2015 took place in Addis Ababa on 23-24 March 2015. This was followed by an experts meeting (25-29 March 2015) of teams from Finance and Planning Ministries in capitals. This was then followed by the African Ministers of Finance Meeting 30-31 March 2015. This series of engagements was meant to develop and finalize Africa's position on the question of Financing for Development, in preparation for the global meeting in July 2015.

The Africa CSO Working Group was invited to participate and offer its expertise at the meeting, which provided opportunity to influence the continental position and interact with numerous government experts working on the FfD and SDG tracks. This engagement (as well as the general Financing for Development conversations) was useful in that it will determine how the ultimate SDG goals will be financed. It's even more important considering that currently at the United Nations; there are proposals and suggestions of collapsing SDGs Means of Implementation with Financing for Development conversations.

Key milestones/highlights:

- The AWG coordinated CSO input was well received by member states, especially by the experts from capitals.
- There were fruitful informal engagements with 2nd Committee negotiators from the UN in NY. The Africa CSO Working Group provided specific comments to the Zero Draft Finance for Development document and based most of these on the Africa CSO position, which includes VAF priorities. This was well received and the team of negotiators promised to source further inputs from the group as the negotiations unfold.
- Engagement with country teams from African member states allowed us to map out and compile a list of those countries interested in working with the Africa CSO Working Group members at the country level. Some countries such as Botswana for instance admitted that their CSOs are weak and they would benefit greatly from the AWG perspectives.
- Africa CSO Working Group inputs shaped the outcome of the African consensus on the data revolution. The main outcome of this was the commitment that for data revolution to be realized all stakeholders (including CSOs) should be an active part of the data ecosystem. In other words generating indicators and statistics for monitoring SDGs is no longer the sole preserve of National Statistical Offices. This augurs well with the next phase of Voice Africa's Future initiative, with its focus on monitoring, accountability, data generation and use. The engagement on data revolution resulted in AWG being invited to an engagement with National Statistics Offices on MDGs and SDGs in Pretoria mid-April.
- We also got useful perspectives from informal interaction with Ministers of Finance, particularly delegates from the following: Ghana, Ethiopia, Gambia, Zimbabwe, Cameroon, Rwanda; Burkina Faso, Namibia, Liberia, Guinea, South Africa - on the content of FfD and SDGs, as well as how AWG can play a complimentary role at country level
- UN magazine (New age) has agreed to cover AWG perspective on SDGs and FfD in their next issue. They also have a web-based platform which we can channel some of our views.
- An International TV Channel based in Dakar interviewed the AWG on Civil Society perspectives on FfD, SDGs and African Vision 2063.

2.1.3.4. Looking ahead

AWG and UN engagements:

Looking forward, the Africa CSO Working Group intends deepening engagements and support to South Africa as G77 Chair and the Africa Group negotiators in New York. The AWG already has informal invitations from the African Union Office of the Observer, South Africa and the Africa Group to play this role. We are also looking forward to take

up speaking opportunities in the forthcoming intergovernmental negotiation sessions to advance agreed African CSO positions.

AWG strengthening regional and national level engagements:

Apart from New York, regional platforms such as AUC and ECA are becoming equally important. In addition, a more focussed engagement with national and regional statistical offices is becoming more urgent than before considering that the development of indicators, as well as reporting of SDGs will be at these levels. Going forward there will be intensification of engagement already started with national statistics offices using the SDG indicators as an entry point. The idea will be to ensure that the national statistics offices appreciate the importance of SDG indicators; and the recognition that CSOs have a role to play in the data ecosystem.

To this effect, the AWG has been invited to an engagement with African Statisticians before end of April in Johannesburg, during an intergovernmental meeting to discuss current SDG indicators in preparation for a broader Africa Meeting on SDGs to be held in Algiers in May. The active involvement of AWG in the African statistics process will help us raise and address some of the issues around efficacy and quality of data, new data gathering systems, and the role of civil society and youth in the data ecosystem.

THE ACTION 2015 CAMPAIGN

3. PROGRAMME EVALUATION: RESULTS, CHANGES IN THE CONTEXT, & RISKS

3.1. ASSESSMENT OF RESULTS:

In the last three months, some encouraging successes are worth high-lighting:

- With the inter-governmental process in full swing, there were a number of opportunities to influence policy at country, continental levels, and global levels. Inputs were made to major groups (child and youth), the African Permanent Representatives Councils at the African union and the United Nations.
- Youth champions and country focal persons were able to meet and engage in discussions about the VAF position in four countries (Ethiopia, Burkina Faso, Kenya and Uganda). In Burkina Faso, the VAF team organised a youth policy dialogue which was attended by policy makers.
- African Monitor together with the Africa CSO Working Group have earned a high-level of trust among key decision making and policy structures at the AU and UN level, thus facilitating ease of engagement.
- The outreach activities to popularize the Key Asks and the Youth Petition are well under way, various creative sessions and events were organised. In the last three months 40 076 young people have signed the youth petition and several creative events were organised.
- African Monitor and team in Uganda and South African are leading Action 2015 work. Partnership in the campaign is helping to bring much needed momentum towards broader citizen engagement in the SDG process.

3.2. CHANGES IN THE CONTEXT:

- **Engaging national statistical offices:** In intergovernmental negotiations, Member States did not support reopening the OWG report for negotiations and resisted “technical proofing” suggested by co-Chairs. This means, our focus will not be on influencing the contents of SDG goals and targets at a global level, but rather the development of indicators. This task has been given to an inter-agency team of experts, who will work closely with country statistical offices to develop indicators. This means that country statistical offices become yet another target for advocacy, as they will have a strong say on the content of the indicators. African Monitor has to develop relationships with key statistical offices in Africa in order to shape indicators being submitted to the United Nations expert team. Furthermore, the timeline for the development of the indicators has been shifted from September 2015 to March 2016.
- **The ‘cherry picking’ dilemma:** Given that all 17 goals have effectively been adopted as part of the new SDG agenda, many concerns have been raised about

the implementability of such a large set of goals. Member States have responded to this challenge by indicating that all countries will have the responsibility to prioritise goals according to their national development imperatives. However, such a strategy increases the risk of “cherry picking”. While engaging with members of the Africa Group during the March session, all of them were clear that the “cherry picking” risk is unavoidable, as no one can pre-determine for member states what they should prioritise. However, there is general agreement that member states will have to report on all goals as part of the monitoring framework regardless of which priorities they have. This means that no particular goals can be completely ignored by a particular member state. African Monitor is concerned that the “cherry picking” risk is a loophole that could give member states justification to refuse implementing more difficult aspects of the SDG agenda, such as Goal 8 dealing with sustainable inclusive growth, Goal 10 dealing with inequality, our Goal 16 dealing with peaceful societies. At the very least, we believe there should be an understanding of the non-negotiable universally applicable goals.

- **The multiple tracks of the sustainability agenda:** The multiple tracks including Financing for Development (FfD) and Means of Implementation, as well as climate change talks are intricately linked to the outcomes of the SDGs. It is necessary to maintain advocacy and CSO representation at all these fronts.
- **The challenge of domestication:** Work has to start at county level on domestication of SDGs; as well as developing a monitoring and accountability framework.

3.3. SUMMARY OF RISKS:

A couple of emerging risks are worth noting that require future management.

- **Unpredictability and flexibility :**
The inter-governmental process - the nature and content of negotiations - is unpredictable and flexibility must be exercised on how to quickly adapt to the processes. At a regional level, new forums are emerging for engagement and influencing all the time - this requires flexibility. As capitals are becoming more involved in the process, capacities at country level have to be strengthened from time to time.
- **Capacity at a county level:**
As processes move to domestication, the ongoing work on indicators, data, and monitoring and accountability means that the skills and capacity required at county level will exceed the existing capacity. African Monitor is working in partnership with Restless Development to strengthen such capacity among VAF youth champions going forward.

Output Indicator 1.1		Baseline Jan 2014	Milestone 1 - Sep 2014	Target March 2016
Completion of power mapping exercise and selection of "key asks" to underpin advocacy and influencing strategy at national, continental and global levels	Planned	Not yet started	Mapping exercise complete, and at least 3 "key asks" identified with CSO and other partners	N/A
	Status:		In progress, to be completed end June.	
	Source			
	Mapping report			
Output Indicator 1.2		Baseline Jan 2014	Milestone 1 - Sep 2014	Target March 2016
Number of VAF youth champions in target countries recruited and trained	Planned	Focal points persons and associates as well continental champions	3 champions per country trained and ensure their active participation	strengthen and ensure involvement in multiple plat forms
	Status:		Achieved	Capacity building workshop planned for April 2015
	Source			
	Country reports and training reports			
Output Indicator 1.3		Baseline Jan 2014	Milestone 1 - Sep 2014	Target March 2016
Consolidation and targeted use of voices and perspectives emerging from VAF initiative, including through innovative advocacy mechanisms	Planned	Not yet started	Narratives generated around key asks using a variety of innovative mechanisms	Narratives used across old and new media to promote and publicise key asks
	Status:		In Progress, on track	In Progress, on track
	Source			
	VAF Key Asks, Petition			

Output Indicator 2.1		Baseline Jan 2014	Milestone 1 - Sep 2014	Target March 2016
Appropriateness of staffing and skills levels at African Monitor for continental leadership role on post-2015 agenda	Planned	Significant staff and skills requirements outstanding	Coordinator and volunteers identified and recruited	N/A
	Status		Achieved	
	Source			
	Staff contract(s)			
Output Indicator 2.2		Baseline Jan 2014	Milestone 1 - Sep 2014	Target March 2016
Development of plan of action of Africa CSO working group on post-2015	Planned	Not yet started	Draft plan of action completed	Plan of action adopted and used as basis for CSO activity around agenda
	Status:		Completed	In progresses on track
	Source			
	Endorsed plan of action			
Output Indicator 2.3		Baseline Jan 2014	Milestone 1 - Sep 2014	Target March 2016
Number of position papers produced around "key asks" for AU and UN consultation exercises on post-2015 and Vision 2063	Planned	Zero	3	10
	Status:		In Progress, on track – st policy brief mid June	Two Policy briefs being finalised
	Source			
	Policy Briefs			

4. SUMMARY OF PLANS FOR THE NEXT THREE MONTHS

During the next three months (April – June 2015), African Monitor will focus on five areas of delivery, i.e.

- **Indicators - Global and national influencing:** The advocacy and influencing work will be intensified both at county, regional and global levels in order to inform the process of defining indicators for the SDG agenda; as well as finalising key elements including the declaration, means of implementation, system for accountability, and financing. Sufficient attention will be given to generating technical content to inform both the Africa Group and national statistical offices.
- **Technical support – Africa Group:** African Monitor and the Africa CSO Working Group on post-2015 have reached agreement with the African Union Office of the Observer to the United Nations, the NEPAD Bureau to the United Nations, and UNECA to provide technical support to the Africa Group. This means being on hand to participate and provide content for several internal workshops to be held by the AU bodies for the Africa Group. Furthermore, there are plans to strengthen the linkage between UN New York, AUC Addis Ababa and the capitals.
- **A strong youth movement:** AM's capacity building programme for the VAF youth champions is ongoing for the duration of the campaign, in order to improve their technical knowledge of the process, but also to equip them with skills to become stronger advocates of the VAF position. A training workshop is being organised to deepen the knowledge and understanding of the post 2015 SDG agenda both in terms of content and processes. This will be followed by a series of support activities conducted at the country level.
- **Popular mobilisation:** The VAF campaign in partnership with Action 2015 will intensify efforts to mobilise youth and African citizens broadly by conducting visible actions and outreach. These activities will be leveraged to increase support for the petition in the build up to September 2015.
- **Preparing ground for domestication of SDGs:** A country level capacity development process will be rolled out in partnership with Restless Development focussing on equipping African youth with a monitoring and accountability system for SDGs.

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