

Localizing the 2030 Agenda in West Africa: Building on What Works

JIMENA LEIVA ROESCH AND MASOOMA RAHMATY



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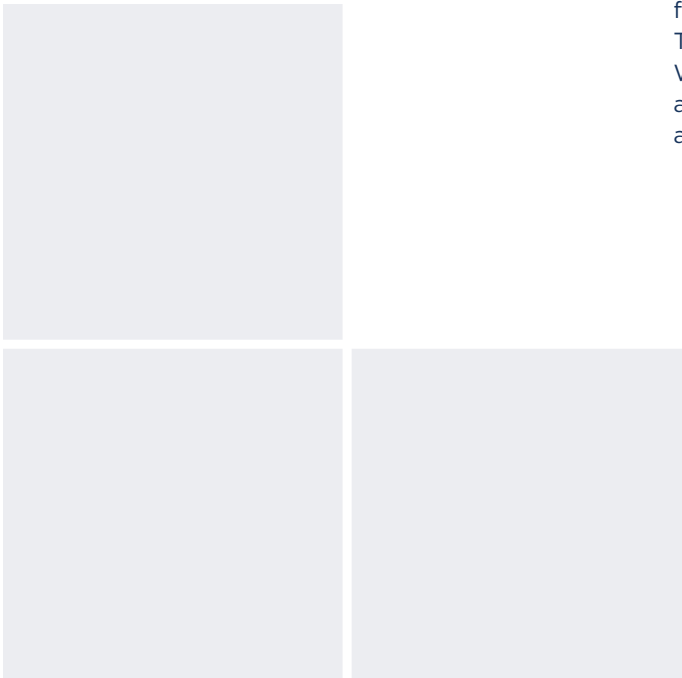
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ABBREVIATIONS

AU	African Union
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
UNOWAS	UN Office for West Africa and the Sahel
UNTFHS	UN Trust Fund for Human Security

Executive Summary

Despite advancement in some areas, countries around the world are still not on track to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The transformation needed to achieve these goals depends on innovation and initiatives that build on existing capacities and fit the needs of local contexts, yet the 2030 Agenda remains largely unknown at the local level. Therefore, a key avenue for progress is to move the focus below the national level to the subnational level, including cities and communities.

Toward this end, together with partners including the UN Trust Fund for Human Security and the Government of The Gambia, the International Peace Institute hosted a forum in Banjul on “Localizing the 2030 Agenda: Building on What Works” in October 2019. This forum provided a platform for learning and sharing among a diverse group of stakeholders, including government officials from both the national and municipal levels, UN resident coordinators, and civil society representatives.

The discussions at this forum shed light on four key factors for designing locally led strategies for implementing the 2030 Agenda in West Africa. First, localization requires ownership across all levels of society. To ensure local ownership, the 2030 Agenda must be anchored in communities’ existing knowledge, capacities, and traditions. Governments can increase local ownership by simplifying the language of the 2030 Agenda and empowering people to address local challenges through dialogue, collective action, and a shared vision for the future. Local ownership also depends on the political will of regional and international actors to adopt a more people-centered, holistic, and long-term approach.

Second, localization benefits from decentralization. In decentralized governance systems, municipal authorities have greater autonomy to operationalize development strategies and tailor

them to local needs. However, since the lack of capacity at the local level often hinders decentralization, there is a need to invest in capacity building, support the realization of existing decentralization initiatives, and ensure that these initiatives reflect local communities’ assets and priorities.

Third, accelerating progress toward the SDGs at the local and national levels requires governments to go beyond shallow forms of coordination toward deeper integration and alignment of their work. Governments need to institutionalize interministerial cooperation and meaningfully communicate on activities and strategies with subnational authorities. They also need to create platforms to regularly engage with civil society, the private sector, the media, and other stakeholders to discuss how they can bring together their respective know-how and resources. The reform of the UN development system could play an important part in supporting such a holistic approach to sustainable development, including the design of locally led strategies.

Finally, integrating and aligning efforts to achieve the SDGs requires mobilizing resources at the local level. Many countries want to break out of the “resource mobilization trap,” whereby they become more focused on chasing donors than on mobilizing resources from within. Breaking out of this trap would allow these countries to have greater autonomy to address their own development priorities, including at the local level.

While West Africa has made progress toward the SDGs, these gains remain fragile. The achievement of the 2030 Agenda will now largely depend on how the world responds to the COVID-19 pandemic. In the face of this pandemic, it is all the more important to renew multilateral cooperation on implementing the 2030 Agenda and to prioritize support to local leadership to accelerate progress.

Introduction

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is one of the few uncontested multilateral achievements of our time. Its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) offer a holistic and universal approach to building peace and promoting sustainable development and, according to the UN secretary-general, are the greatest preventive tool the world has at its disposal and the best roadmap to recover from COVID-19.¹ African countries are also guided by the African Union's (AU) Agenda 2063, a blueprint for inclusive and sustainable development and "a concrete manifestation of the pan-African drive for unity, self-determination, freedom, progress and collective prosperity."²

Despite advancement in some areas, it is widely acknowledged that the world is not on track to achieve the SDGs, and progress is uneven across different goals and countries.³ While there is no one-size-fits-all approach to achieving sustainable development, transformation depends on innovation and initiatives that build on existing capacities and fit the needs of local contexts. Therefore, a key avenue for accelerating progress is to move the focus below the national level to the subnational level, including cities and communities.

A key avenue for accelerating progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals is to move the focus below the national level to the subnational level, including cities and communities.

This report highlights the path some West African countries have taken toward developing locally led strategies for implementing the 2030 Agenda. It is the result of two years of research and convening as part of an initiative examining how to accelerate progress toward the 2030 Agenda. At the heart of this initiative was a subregional forum held in Banjul, The Gambia, from October 27 to 29, 2019. The forum brought together seventy-eight participants from eight contiguous West African

countries—Côte d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Senegal, and Sierra Leone—as well as members of the international community (see Figure 1). The forum was the first of its kind in the subregion and provided a platform for learning and sharing among a diverse group of stakeholders, including government officials from both the national and municipal levels, UN resident coordinators, and civil society representatives.

The forum took place on the eve of 2020, which marks the beginning of the last decade of the 2030 Agenda. Since then, the world has entered a period of uncertainty with the COVID-19 pandemic. Already, the pandemic is reversing progress on sustainable development, eroding socioeconomic gains, and threatening to push millions of people into poverty. At the same time, recognizing the pandemic's cost in lives and livelihoods could provide an added impulse to increase collaboration and redouble efforts to work toward the achievement of the 2030 Agenda's goals and targets.

Building on the discussions at the forum, this report sheds light on key factors for designing locally led strategies for implementing the 2030 Agenda. It draws on the human security framework, which focuses on comprehensive, context-specific, people-centered, and preventive responses to complex challenges.⁴ The report also considers the early results of the UN development system reform, which aims to make the UN more efficient, effective, and relevant at the local level. The UN can help catalyze locally led strategies for achieving the 2030 Agenda that are inclusive and that empower people and communities to accelerate impact and measure progress.

1 Secretary-General's remarks at the opening of the HLPF Ministerial Segment, July 16, 2019, available at <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/statement/2019-07-16/secretary-generals-remarks-opening-of-high-level-political-forum-ministerial-segment-delivered>; António Guterres, "The Recovery from the COVID-19 Crisis Must Lead to a Different Economy," United Nations, March 31, 2020, available at <https://www.un.org/en/un-coronavirus-communications-team/launch-report-socio-economic-impacts-covid-19>.

2 African Union, "Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want," available at <https://au.int/en/agenda2063/overview>.

3 UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, "The Future Is Now: Science for Achieving Sustainable Development—Global Sustainable Development Report 2019," 2019.

4 For a more comprehensive understanding of human security, see: UN Trust Fund for Human Security, "What Is Human Security," available at <https://www.un.org/humansecurity/what-is-human-security/>.

Designing Locally Led Strategies for the 2030 Agenda

The 2030 Agenda charted a shared vision and plan for humanity. Since its adoption, over 142 countries have presented their voluntary national reviews on how they are implementing the agenda. Of all the voluntary national reviews presented until the 2018 session, thirty-five have made explicit links between the SDGs and their national budgets. Despite these efforts, “the world is not on track to achieving most of the 169 targets that comprise the Goals.” With just ten years left to reach the benchmark, the Global Sustainable Development Report concludes, “The universal transformation towards sustainable development in the next decade depends on the simultaneous achievement of country specific innovative pathways.”⁵ Accelerating this progress requires the involvement of all levels of governments and all sectors of society. Yet with a few exceptions, the 2030 Agenda remains largely unknown at the local level.

What is Localization?

To address this gap, there has been an increase in initiatives to localize the 2030 Agenda. According to the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments, localization goes beyond “the simple adaptation of global goals to the local level... [It] is about political will, co-creation with our communities and [finding] solutions at the local level for the global challenges and objectives.”⁶ In other words, “localization isn’t the parachuting of global goals into local contexts.”⁷ It is about building a strong relationship between global, national, and local actors, with citizens actively participating in the development of their country. A top-down-only approach will not create the local ownership needed to galvanize economic, social, and environmental transformation, nor will it ensure that global agendas reflect local realities.



Forum participants from Ghana and Liberia discuss the “ingredients” of a locally led, locally owned 2030 Agenda.

Localization of the SDGs also needs to be ingrained into the mindset of the international community. Far too often, resources are poured into developing countries from the top, while local communities remain unseen and unheard. As a result, these resources may not be directed to and absorbed at the local level.⁸ Moreover, international analyses often overemphasize an assessment of risks rather than the strengths, assets, and capacities of communities. This can lead international actors to seek external solutions to local challenges rather than identifying and developing local solutions to global challenges.⁹

There is a risk of romanticizing the local, however. There are obstacles that make it difficult to advance the SDGs at the local level, such as varying levels of

5 UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *Global Sustainable Development Report 2019*, p. xx.

6 Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments, “Statement of the Local and Regional Governments Constituency Gathered in the Global Taskforce,” July 2018.

7 United Cities and Local Governments, “Strategic Priorities 2016–2022,” p. 17, available at https://www.uclg.org/sites/default/files/prioridades_estrat-eng-web.pdf.

8 Catalyst for Peace, “Constellating Peace from the Inside Out,” 2019, p. 15.

9 Peter Coleman, “Half the Peace: The Fear Challenge and the Case for Promoting Peace,” *IPI Global Observatory*, March 19, 2018.

capacity and skills, a lack of resources, language barriers, and tribal, clan, or religious dynamics.¹⁰ These challenges often widen the disconnect between the national and local levels, which is the main impediment to localization. National governments often do not give local officials and communities sufficient opportunity to weigh in on development opportunities and challenges.

Developing locally led strategies for the 2030 Agenda requires connecting both vertically and horizontally through what has been described as multi-level governance: vertically between different levels of government, including national, regional, and local; and horizontally between different institutions or sectors at the same level (e.g., between national ministries or between the government, civil society, the private sector, and the people).¹¹ Governments have made an effort to align the 2030 Agenda with national development plans through their voluntary national reviews. However, they need to direct much more attention toward connecting the goals and targets to governance systems at the local level and toward seeking whole-of-society solutions that bring together diverse stakeholders. The farther away they are from their country's capital city, the less knowledge and awareness people have of the SDGs.

A key layer of governance that needs to be engaged in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda is municipal authorities such as mayors, who are more connected with local leaders and aware of the needs and aspirations of their communities. The role of these municipal authorities is especially important in rural areas, where the information gap is the widest. These authorities can help align the 2030 Agenda with local development plans, thereby increasing buy-in to the Agenda and mobilizing

Localization is about building a strong relationship between global, national, and local actors, with citizens actively participating in the development of their country.

know-how and resources to accelerate its implementation. So far, mayors' only entry points to the 2030 Agenda are the New Urban Agenda, adopted in 2016 as a framework for cities to work toward the SDGs (mainly through SDG 11, which calls for making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable), and the emerging voluntary local reviews, through which more than a dozen cities have localized the SDGs.¹² However, these initiatives remain ad hoc and need to be expanded and supported on a global scale.

At the national level, having seventeen SDGs (as opposed to the eight Millennium Development Goals) also makes it challenging for governments to address multiple priorities that are sometimes seen as competing with one another. As a result, each goal can become its own closed ecosystem, with a limited number of actors, sectors, and individuals involved. This approach may be necessary, to some extent, in order to focus in depth on each goal. At the same time, each goal must be viewed against the backdrop of the entire SDG ecosystem to

understand the linkages, trade-offs, and synergies among the goals and targets. The Global Sustainable Development Report thus highlights the need for "a profound and intentional departure from business as usual" and for "taking into account the interactions between Goals and targets."¹³

At the local level, this big-picture approach may be less daunting. It becomes more feasible to identify the interconnections across SDGs when they are linked to a specific community or city rather than an entire country. There is also a greater possibility for uncovering inequalities and identifying those groups that are most vulnerable and furthest behind. There may be existing networks of

10 See UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, "Global Sustainable Development Report 2019"; and UN Development Programme and World Bank Group, "Transitioning from the MDGs to the SDGs," November 2016.

11 UN General Assembly, *Urban Governance, Capacity and Institutional Development—Note by the Secretariat*, UN Doc. A/CONF.226/PC.3/17, June 13, 2016, p. 6.

12 For more on voluntary local reviews, see SDGs Knowledge Platform, "SDG 11: Reports from Local Authorities," available at <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg11/local>; Anthony F. Pipa and Max Bouchet, "Next Generation Urban Planning: Enabling Sustainable Development at the Local Level through Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs)," Brookings Institutions, February 9, 2020; and Hirotaka Koize, Fernando Ortiz-Moya, Junichi Fujino, and Yatsuka Kataoka, "How Can Voluntary Local Reviews Contribute to the SDG Decade of Action? An Assessment of VLRs to Date," International Institute for Sustainable Development, May 8, 2020.

13 UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, "Global Sustainable Development Report 2019," pp. xx, 5.

stakeholders from different institutions and sectors that can be leveraged for a comprehensive approach to sustainable development at the local level. While certain systemic issues require a national-level approach, there is a vast amount of work that can be done to accelerate the 2030 Agenda at the local level.

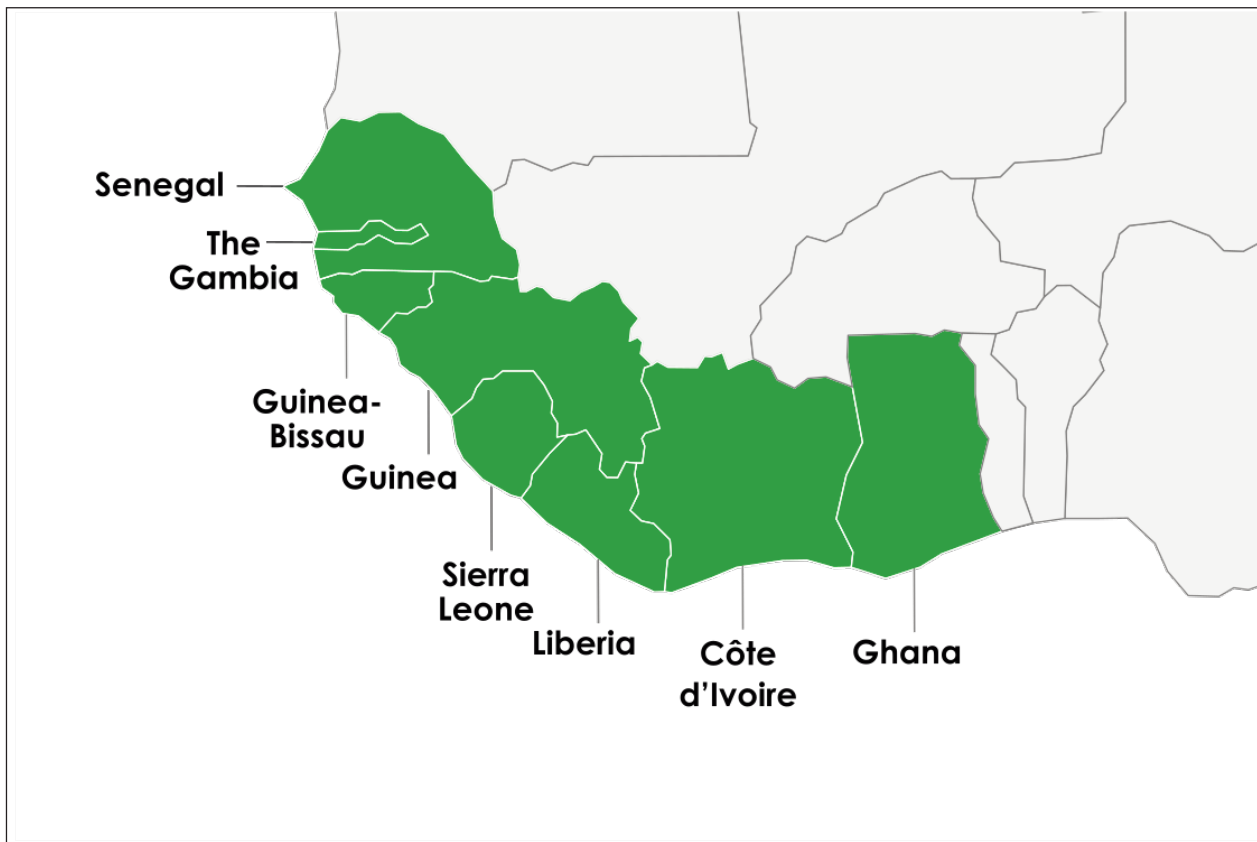
Why West Africa?

West Africa has emerged as one of the fastest-growing subregions in Africa, presenting numerous opportunities and challenges for advancing sustainable development. Across the region, most countries have made notable progress on climate action. Moderate progress has also been made to address hunger, promote decent work and economic growth, protect the oceans and sustain-

ably use terrestrial resources, and advance partnerships.¹⁴ However, the subregion faces major political, economic, social, and environmental challenges, including climate change, inequality, migration, and mismanagement of natural resources that have caused progress to stagnate on other areas of the SDGs. On top of these challenges, the 2013–2014 Ebola outbreak in Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone killed more than 11,000 people.¹⁵

The region has also made progress toward political stability after three decades of turmoil.¹⁶ Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, and Sierra Leone have recently transitioned from conflict to peace, as evidenced by the departure of UN peacekeeping missions from all three countries. After going through a bloody four-year civil war beginning in 2002 and five months of violent clashes over disputed presiden-

Figure 1. West African countries participating in the forum on “Localizing the 2030 Agenda”



14 Sustainable Development Goals Center for Africa and Sustainable Development Solutions Network, “2019 Africa: SDG Index and Dashboards Report,” June 2019.

15 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “2014–2016 Ebola Outbreak in West Africa,” March 8, 2019, available at <https://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/history/2014-2016-outbreak/index.html>.

16 Alexandre Marc, Neelam Verjee, and Stephen Mogaka, “The Challenges of Stability and Security in West Africa,” Agence Française de Développement and World Bank Group, June 2015.

tial polls in 2010, Côte d'Ivoire is poised to witness the first democratic transfer of power in its history following the decision by President Alassane Ouattara not to seek re-election. Sierra Leone is one of the most striking examples of a transition toward peace and development, following a brutal civil war between 1991 and 2002. Thanks to national initiatives and local civil society efforts, with the support of international organizations, donors, and UN and subregional peacekeeping missions, many now consider Sierra Leone to be one of the most successful cases of post-conflict recovery, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding. Ghana and Senegal, which have also emerged as key players in the subregion, have recently undertaken efforts to reform their economic and governance structure, and are considered among the most stable countries in Africa.

West Africa is also making strides toward economic integration and political cooperation through the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).¹⁷ ECOWAS has demonstrated the capacity to prevent or mitigate violent conflicts in the subregion, including in The Gambia, where it galvanized regional leadership and international support to avert a potential conflict following the 2016 elections. In 2019, ECOWAS launched a Plan of Action for its 2008 Conflict Prevention Framework.¹⁸ In addition to ECOWAS, West Africa is host to the UN Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS), which is responsible for consolidating peace and good governance in the subregion. It also hosts a subregional branch of the SDG Center for Africa, which is charged with accelerating the implementation of the SDGs in Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone.¹⁹

After the adoption of the 2030 Agenda five years ago, many countries, including the eight West African countries that participated in the forum in The Gambia, are prepared to capitalize on and

accelerate the progress made to date. At the national level, all eight countries have integrated the SDGs into their national development plans. Five have presented their voluntary national reviews during the High-Level Political Forum in New York: Ghana, Sierra Leone (twice), Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, and Senegal. The Gambia and Liberia are scheduled to present their progress reports at the 2020 forum in July.²⁰

However, the progress achieved so far will be set back by the current COVID-19 pandemic, as the region redirects its focus to preventing the spread of the disease and dealing with the economic, social, and political aftershocks. There is a risk that the redirection of resources to the health sector could have negative repercussions in other areas such as agriculture and food security, as was the case after the Ebola epidemic.²¹ This makes it all the more important that the 2030 Agenda guides national and international action and partnerships. Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic on many fronts, it has also created a window for seeking holistic solutions that transcend silos and foster collaboration and solidarity, such as increased collaboration between governments and the private sector. If the response to COVID-19 is “globally coordinated and locally led,” it could increase momentum toward achieving the SDGs.²² It is therefore paramount that these countries and the international community remain committed to localizing the 2030 Agenda through this crisis.

Designing Locally Led Strategies for the 2030 Agenda in West Africa

To localize the 2030 Agenda and the African Union's Agenda 2063 in West Africa, the governments of the region and the UN need to change the way they usually work. They need to design

17 The members of ECOWAS are Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo.

18 See: ECOWAS, “ECOWAS Launches Plans of Action for Its Conflict Prevention Framework,” January 24, 2019, available at <http://www.ecowas.int/ecowas-launches-plans-of-action-for-its-conflict-prevention-framework/>.

19 Catherine Benson Wahlén, “SDGs Center for Africa Establishes West African Center,” SDG Knowledge Hub, January 18, 2018.

20 See: Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform, “Voluntary National Reviews Database,” available at <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/vnrs/>.

21 UN Foundation interactive webinar on “Financing for Sustainable Development: ODA in the Context of COVID-19,” May 6, 2020.

22 Comment by Oxfam representative on UN Foundation webinar, May 6, 2020.

mechanisms and processes that allow them to regularly interact with municipal authorities, community leaders, grassroots organizations, and the private sector. The forum on “Localizing the 2030 Agenda” facilitated discussions on how to do this by asking participants to share innovative and successful solutions to sustainable development challenges at the local level and to identify the elements contributing to their success. The discussions revealed several essential components of efforts to localize the SDGs in West Africa: ownership across all levels of society; decentralization; coordination, integration, and alignment; and mobilization of resources to support implementation at the local level. Greater clarity on the roles that different actors play (governments, civil society, the international community, and regional organizations) is another critical component to designing successful localization strategies.

National governments are responsible for creating an environment where effective local solutions can thrive and for engaging citizens, communities, local authorities, and local businesses.

Local Ownership

The 2030 Agenda puts governments in the driver’s seat, with the UN providing critical support. As Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed emphasized, localization means “true ownership by all stakeholders” and requires the “aspiration of the SDGs [to become] a reality for communities, households, and individuals, particularly those who are at risk of falling behind the most.”²³ As the COVID-19 response has demonstrated, national governments cannot act alone. They are thus responsible for creating an environment where effective local solutions can thrive and for engaging citizens, communities, local authorities, and local businesses. As a representative of ECOWAS mentioned, “There are a lot of structures, but [the] key is engagement with citizens.... Currently there is a gap between government and the people.”²⁴

To penetrate the local level, global and national agendas need to be perceived as flexible frame-

works that adapt to context-specific realities and existing local development plans. This requires anchoring the 2030 Agenda in communities’ existing knowledge, capacity, and traditions. For example, national governments can engage with traditional or religious leaders to help ground the SDGs in communities’ value systems (see Box 1 for an example of this in Sierra Leone).²⁵ The 2030 Agenda’s vision “of the people, for the people, and by the people,” should be part of the localization process.

Governments can also increase local ownership by simplifying the language of the 2030 Agenda into digestible ideas that reflect the reality of people’s lives, translating it into local languages, and increasing the dissemination of the SDGs beyond major cities. At the same time, they need to go beyond awareness raising; they need to promote citizen participation in the achievement of the SDGs and empower people to take initiative and address local challenges through dialogue, collective action, and a shared vision for the future.

In developing localized approaches, the countries of West Africa have much to learn from each other. Regular dialogue among countries in the region can allow for the exchange of information on good practices and policies that promote citizen participation and local ownership. One participant in the forum stated that “there is a need for more platforms such as this [forum] for sharing experiences from the subregion.”²⁶

Beyond national governments, local ownership also depends on the political will of regional and international actors to adopt a more people-centered, holistic, and long-term approach. These actors are often seen as intermittent players that only engage when there is a crisis or to support specific priorities. By building on what works at the

23 Amina Mohammed, remarks delivered at forum on “Localizing the 2030 Agenda,” Banjul, The Gambia, October 27, 2019, available at http://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=94&v=WRM5JkToDQ8&feature=emb_title.

24 ECOWAS representative statement at virtual IPI roundtable on the impacts of COVID-19 in West Africa, April 23, 2020.; phone interview with ECOWAS representative, February 10, 2020.

25 Roundtable discussion, forum in Banjul, The Gambia, October 28, 2019.

26 Statement by ECOWAS representative, forum in Banjul, The Gambia, October 29, 2019.

local level and fostering local ownership, they can shift their engagement on sustainable development beyond short-term solutions toward support that catalyzes transformative outcomes. It is possible to close the gap between government and people by designing inclusive, transparent, and collaborative approaches toward the SDGs (see Box 1 on Sierra Leone). Building this ownership takes time and requires a longer-term commitment by all partners.

Decentralization

Decentralization is a critical component of localizing the 2030 Agenda. When power, knowledge, and resources are primarily concentrated in the central government, it becomes a daunting task to localize the 2030 Agenda in areas beyond the capital. This gap between urban and rural areas can be addressed by more systematically involving subnational governments. As United Cities and Local Governments points out, “Subnational governments are policy makers, catalysts for change and the level of government best placed to link the global goals with local

communities.”²⁷

Many participants in the forum stated that decentralization could help implement the 2030 Agenda at the local level. In decentralized governance systems, municipal authorities have greater autonomy to operationalize development strategies and tailor them to local needs. Strengthening the role of local governments can facilitate vertical integration, creating greater cohesiveness in development planning from the local to the national level. In addition, a decentralized structure creates avenues for people-centered solutions and for addressing context-specific priorities.

Several countries in West Africa have prioritized decentralization.²⁸ For example, Guinea has been working to decentralize its governance system since 1985. In 2006, it adopted the Local Government Code, which put local governments at the forefront of service delivery.²⁹ More recently, it has developed participatory budgeting processes through which local communities decide how to

Box 1. Building ownership at the community level in Sierra Leone

The Wan Fambul Framework for Inclusive Governance and Local Development in Sierra Leone is an example of an approach grounded in strong community ownership and developed through a multi-stakeholder approach. “Wan Fambul,” which loosely translates to “we are all one family,” represents the concept of inclusiveness and the notion that there is a place for everyone in the civic space. Through an inclusive, transparent, and collaborative approach, the Wan Fambul framework’s objective is to facilitate inclusive, community-centered, and sustainable rural development that leads to resilient communities across Sierra Leone. It is grounded in the belief that “until development is taken to the ‘doorsteps of the citizens,’ the nation cannot effectively move forward together.”³⁰

The Wan Fambul framework was developed beginning in 2016 through a partnership between the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development and the NGOs Fambul Tok and Catalyst for Peace. It is linked to Sierra Leone’s National Development Plan, which is aligned with the SDGs. The framework was developed through a holistic, community-owned, and community-led process called the People’s Planning Process, initially implemented in three districts (Kailahun, Koinadugu, and Moyamba) over the course of two and a half years.³¹ The process directly engaged communities in championing their own welfare and development through inclusive district committees that coordinate and bring together local peace and development stakeholders, including religious leaders and women’s and youth organizations.

27 Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments, “Roadmap for Localizing the SDGs: Implementation and Monitoring at Subnational Level,” June 2016, p. 7.

28 Guinea-Bissau was mentioned as an exception, with a highly centralized government that has made it difficult to localize the 2030 Agenda.

29 World Bank, “Decentralization in Guinea: Strengthening Accountability for Better Service Delivery,” September 28, 2008.

30 Government of Sierra Leone, “Wan Fambul One Family: National Framework for Inclusive Governance and Local Development in Sierra Leone—Draft for Consultation,” December 2018.

31 Fambul Tok International, “The People’s Planning Process,” available at <http://www.fambultok.org/what-is-fambul-tok/the-peoples-planning-process>.

spend their resources.³² However, despite these efforts to decentralize and provide opportunities for local governments to take charge, a lack of sufficient revenue and low capacity have undermined the effectiveness of decentralization.³³

Another example is Ghana, which is using a decentralized planning system put in place in 1994 to implement its national development plan, which is aligned with the SDGs. This system assigns planning functions both to national ministries, departments, and agencies and to metropolitan, municipal, and district assemblies at the local level. A National Development Planning Commission coordinates this system with the support of sixteen regional coordinating councils. The Ministry of Planning also coordinates development policy and supports monitoring efforts. For effective implementation and coordination of the SDGs, a three-tier structure—a High-Level Ministerial Committee, multi-stakeholder Implementation Coordinating and Technical Committees, and a platform for civil society organizations—has been set up to provide leadership, build innovative partnerships, ensure accountability for implementation, and integrate lessons learned into ongoing national development efforts.³⁴ Despite this decentralized planning system, participants from Ghana mentioned that coordination among these bodies is still a challenge. Their functions, planning processes, and programs often overlap, and more resources are needed for them to perform effectively.³⁵

These examples showcase how decentralization policies are an important component in localizing the 2030 Agenda and accelerating action. Several forum participants mentioned that the lack of capacities at the local level often hinders decentralization. To move forward, there is a need to invest in capacity building at the local level, support the realization of existing decentralization initiatives, and ensure that these initiatives reflect the community's assets and priorities.

From Coordination to Integration and Alignment

Accelerating progress toward the SDGs at the local and national levels requires governments to go beyond shallow forms of coordination toward deeper integration and alignment of their work. The current modality is that a national ministry—usually the ministry of planning or finance—takes the lead on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and, at best, sets up an interministerial taskforce to receive general updates from other ministries. Civil society and the private sector are generally consulted but not meaningfully engaged.

To advance the 2030 Agenda, governments need to institutionalize interministerial cooperation and meaningfully communicate and cooperate on activities and strategies with subnational authorities. Most institutions also need to improve mechanisms to communicate and work across departments, agencies, and levels to more systematically share information and combine expertise across all levels of government.

In the West Africa region, Guinea has one of the most detailed structures for coordinating the implementation and monitoring of its development initiatives. The government of Guinea has set up multi-stakeholder bodies to review and follow up on its development plan, including a National Steering Committee, an Expert Advisory Committee, and a Technical Secretariat Team. This structure is replicated at the local, municipal, and regional levels.

Liberia's UN sustainable development cooperation framework (2020–2024), which supports the country's Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development, is another example of an effort to localize the SDGs through better coordination and alignment of efforts.³⁶ This five-year framework is aligned with the SDGs and was developed through multi-stakeholder consultations with the government and development partners. The UN country

32 Kaori Oshima and Nicolas Perrin, "Citizen Engagement in Rural Guinea: Making Tangible Changes from the Bottom Up," World Bank Blogs, January 18, 2018.

33 World Bank, "Decentralization in Guinea."

34 Interview with a Ghanaian official, January 1, 2020.

35 Ghana roundtable at forum in Banjul, October 28, 2019.

36 UN Liberia, "Government of Liberia, UN and Development Partners Sign 5-Year Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework in Support of the Pro Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development," August 19, 2019.

team will be working closely with the government and other actors to implement this framework, prioritizing localizing the SDGs, leaving no one behind, and addressing national priorities.³⁷

There is also a need to create platforms for regularly engaging with civil society, the private sector, the media, and other stakeholders to discuss how they can bring together their respective know-how and resources in a genuinely multi-stakeholder effort. Such platforms should also include partners in the UN system. On their end, UN entities could also enhance their support to government institutions by more comprehensively integrating their policy advice and programmatic support, where appropriate.

Accelerating progress toward the SDGs at the local and national levels requires governments to go beyond shallow forms of coordination toward deeper integration and alignment of their work.

Mobilizing Resources

The 2020 Financing for Sustainable Development Report finds that overall funding for the 2030 Agenda is not only insufficient but is also backsliding.³⁸ Many developing countries, especially the least-developed countries, rely on international assistance to effectively advance and localize the 2030 Agenda.³⁹ However, bilateral official development assistance to the least-developed countries fell by 3 percent in 2018—and 4 percent in Africa—and is now well below the commitment of 0.7 percent of gross national income made by donor countries in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.⁴⁰

In this context, financing locally led strategies for implementing the 2030 Agenda remains one of the most pressing challenges. Integrating and aligning efforts to achieve the SDGs within the government, as well as between the government and other sectors, requires mobilizing and allocating resources at the local level. However, funding for

local-level government structures is often inadequate.

Many countries in West Africa have expressed their desire to move beyond aid and to administer domestic resources in a more sustainable way. As one forum participant noted, many countries want to escape from the “resource mobilization trap,” whereby their full-time job is to chase donors instead of trying to mobilize resources from within.

Breaking out of this trap would allow governments greater autonomy to address their own development priorities and set their own paths. For example, ECOWAS has imposed a financial levy of 0.5 percent on goods from non-ECOWAS countries to help sustain its operations without over-relying on donors.

However, the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic will likely hurt ECOWAS’s finances. According to an ECOWAS representative, “The health crisis is likely to affect ECOWAS’s 2021 work plan, and there is concern that the 2020 budget won’t be enough to respond to the pandemic’s impact.”⁴¹

Ghana has also taken measures to use more of its own resources for the country’s development. It has developed the Ghana Beyond Aid Charter to transform the economy by harnessing national resources while reducing dependence on foreign aid. The charter was announced at the inauguration of President Nana Akufo-Addo, where he stated that “a Ghana Beyond Aid is a prosperous and self-confident Ghana that is in charge of her economic destiny; a transformed Ghana that is prosperous enough to be beyond needing aid, and that engages competitively with the rest of the world through trade and investment.”⁴² In pursuing this vision, the government has been working on a number of

37 Zoom interview with UN Official in Liberia, February 2020.

38 Inter-agency Task Force on Financing for Sustainable Development, “Financing for Sustainable Development Report 2020,” 2020.

39 With the exception of Côte d’Ivoire and Ghana, all the countries that participated in the forum are considered least-developed countries. UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, “LDCs at a Glance,” March 2018, available at <https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/least-developed-country-category-at-a-glance.html>.

40 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, “Development Aid Drops in 2018, Especially to Neediest Countries,” April 10, 2019.

41 Contribution at virtual IPI roundtable on the impacts of COVID-19 in West Africa, April 23, 2020.

42 Government of Ghana, “Ghana beyond Aid Charter and Strategy Document,” April 2019.

policy, regulatory, and institutional reforms. These have included moving to paperless port operations to reduce delays in clearing goods and increase revenues and implementing an e-payment platform that allows people to do business electronically.

Despite efforts to mobilize their own resources, the countries of West Africa will require even more international assistance to respond to the health and economic repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic. In March, the UN called for \$500 billion in aid to low- and middle-income countries in response to the pandemic.⁴³ With this increase in aid, donors might fulfil their commitment to spending 0.7 percent of their gross national income on official development assistance. However, it remains to be seen whether donor countries will provide this aid and turn expressions of solidarity

into meaningful global action.

If these commitments do emerge, this funding should be “globally coordinated and locally led.”⁴⁴ This approach could help avoid the challenges faced during the Ebola epidemic when there was an influx of outside resources, but donors often saw the people of West Africa as aid recipients instead of partners. The fight against COVID-19 provides an opportunity to adopt a coordinated approach that engages not only national ministries and departments but also people and institutions at the community level. One approach that could be further explored is the use of international seed funding and pooled funding mechanisms to reduce the risks taken on by international partners and scale up local-level initiatives (see Box 2 on The Gambia).

Box 2. Leveraging partnerships and pooling resources in The Gambia

The construction of the Senegambia bridge, which opened in 2019, aims to revolutionize transport between The Gambia and Senegal and bolster economic growth. For local communities in The Gambia, however, the construction of the bridge has meant the disappearance of river traffic and customers for local vendors and businesses, resulting in loss of revenue and pushing formerly non-poor households into poverty. With climate change also impacting seasonal employment, the communities in Kerewan and Mansakonko have become more vulnerable.

In response, the government, in partnership with local authorities, women and youth leaders, the UN country team, and the UN Trust Fund for Human Security (UNTFHS) are developing a pilot initiative to harness the economic opportunities presented by the bridge. Using a community-driven model, the initiative seeks to unlock the power of people, channel resources to local stakeholders who often have difficulty obtaining financing, and promote innovative and sustainable strategies that better link the local economy with national development priorities.

Leveraging seed funding from the UNTFHS, the government and the UN country team are pooling additional resources to maximize the scope and reach of this initiative. Based on a unified funding stream, partners will tackle an interlinked set of SDGs, simultaneously addressing the impact of multidimensional poverty, the effects of climate change, and the unintended consequences of major infrastructure projects on those most vulnerable. By deepening collaboration and increasing return on investment, the initiative, if successful, will showcase the added value of a globally coordinated and locally led approach to galvanize multilateral and bilateral support to advance the 2030 Agenda at the local level.

43 UN Conference on Trade and Development, “UN Calls for \$2.5 Trillion Coronavirus Crisis Package for Developing Countries,” March 30, 2020, available at <https://unctad.org/en/pages/newsdetails.aspx?OriginalVersionID=2315>.

44 Oxfam, “Whatever It Takes: A Rapid and Massive Increase in Aid Is Needed to Save Millions of Lives and Bring Our Divided World Together amid the Coronavirus Pandemic,” May 2020.

The Role of the UN Development System Reform in Localizing the 2030 Agenda

UN country teams have an important role to play in localizing the 2030 Agenda, and expectations in West Africa are high for the UN to deliver. The subregion has benefited from the UN's provision of humanitarian and development assistance and partnerships with the UN on peacebuilding and stabilization. The UN country teams in West Africa support government agencies and ministries, including by building their capacity, helping deliver basic services, and convening dialogue with other stakeholders.

After the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, it became clear that the United Nations development system needed to transform its way of working to help countries meet the SDGs. In 2018, UN member states passed a resolution reforming this system, affirming that its main focus should be on supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.⁴⁵ The reform, which went into effect on January 1, 2019, aims to make the UN's approach to development more coherent, integrated, and holistic, including through joint analysis, data sharing, and pooling of resources. However, on the ground, the reform process has slowed down localization efforts, as UN country teams have needed time to reorganize themselves internally and transfer some responsibilities from the UN Development Program to the resident coordinator system.

This reform will have ripple effects on efforts to localize implementation of the 2030 Agenda, many

of which are already evident in West Africa. In Senegal, for example, the involvement of the private sector and localization of the 2030 Agenda are integrated into the sustainable development cooperation framework, signed by the resident coordinator, the heads of UN agencies in the country, and the government of Senegal. Moreover, the country team has identified the regions in Senegal that have been the most left behind by sustainable development efforts. The focus on the most vulnerable and on leaving no one behind is now a central motto in all UN country teams.

At the country level, the reform emphasizes multi-agency coordination. Currently, eleven UN

The UN needs to work hand in hand not only with national governments—its primary interlocutors—but also with municipal authorities and other local leaders.

agencies, brought together under the leadership of the resident coordinator, are supporting the government of Senegal and local authorities on a wide variety of initiatives to provide basic services to the country's most vulnerable communities.⁴⁶ For instance, the Muskoka Fund is working

with three national ministries, local authorities, and four UN agencies to reduce maternal, neonatal, and child mortality.⁴⁷ Such multi-agency initiatives can help reduce competition among UN agencies, which resident coordinators in West Africa cited as a major factor limiting the localization of the 2030 Agenda.⁴⁸ These efforts also show the importance of partnerships with municipal authorities and external actors to support the acceleration of the 2030 Agenda at the local level.

The UN needs to work hand in hand not only with national governments—its primary interlocutors—but also with municipal authorities and other local leaders. As noted by a senior UN official, the “UN is still learning how to work with stakeholders beyond the national level, and coordination with stakeholders is still a big challenge.”⁴⁹

⁴⁵ UN General Assembly Resolution 72/279 (May 31, 2018), UN Doc. A/RES/72/279, June 1, 2018.

⁴⁶ These agencies include the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the Food and Agriculture Organization, the UN Development Programme (UNDP), the UN Information Centres, UNICEF, the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), UN Volunteers, UN Women, the World Food Programme, and the World Health Organization (WHO).

⁴⁷ The Muskoka Project contributes to the achievement of SDG 3 (good health and well-being); 5 (gender equality); 10 (reduced inequalities); 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions); and 17 (partnerships for the goals).

⁴⁸ Interviews with eight resident coordinators, July 2019.

⁴⁹ Roundtable discussion, forum in Banjul, The Gambia, October 28, 2019.

The UN also needs to work more closely with nongovernmental stakeholders, including the domestic private sector and small and medium-sized enterprises. An entrepreneur from Guinea-Bissau with a successful company through which she funds an NGO for women mentioned, “I thought the UN cannot help me because I am a private company. I don’t know who can help or who to ask. I’ve tried but it does not seem possible.”⁵⁰ The reform process has opened the door for the UN to reflect on its role and on how it can better help coordinate the localization of the SDGs and support more systematic and inclusive processes for engaging stakeholders at the local level.

A locally led approach provides an entry point for multi-sector, multi-stakeholder action that can better address the challenges that impede development at the local level. To this end, the UN development system reform holds great promise. It could make support more integrated and more focused on delivery on the ground by bringing together the UN’s capacities, skill sets, and resources in partnership with others. While it will take time to see the results of this shift, this reform will be essential to accelerating progress toward the SDGs in West Africa and beyond.

Designing locally led strategies for implementing the 2030 Agenda requires acknowledging local values, resources, capacities, and leaders and understanding and appreciating local contexts and histories.

The Way Forward

West Africa stands at a crossroads. While it has made strides toward prosperity and peace, these gains remain fragile. International attention and funding are lacking, with the exception of the Sahel region. To steadily advance on the 2030 Agenda, it is necessary to build from what already works and to use existing mechanisms, resources, and capacities to mobilize action toward the SDGs. The 2030

Agenda offers a universal platform that rises above local and national interests and provides a unifying, global vision that can weather election cycles and crises. While national and local interests are always at play, the 2030 Agenda offers a neutral ground and a universal language on sustainable development with the international community.

However, the COVID-19 pandemic has turned the world upside down. It remains to be seen whether it will lead to greater cooperation and a renewed multilateralism or will reinforce borders and heighten insularity. The achievement of the 2030 Agenda will largely depend on how the world responds to this pandemic. As we enter the last decade of delivery, it is of the utmost importance to renew momentum and collectively move forward.

Designing locally led strategies for implementing the 2030 Agenda requires new mind sets and tools for international organizations and national governments. To design these strategies, it starts by acknowledging local values, resources, capacities, and leaders and by understanding and appreciating local contexts and histories. It means creating partnerships that include the voices and participation of a broad set of local stakeholders from diverse sectors and institutions. It requires connecting the different levels of government, from local authorities all the way up to the president or prime minister’s office. This new model of governance, where people and communities participate in the decision making process and take part in achieving the SDGs is already happening and is a positive sign for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. Additionally, West Africa provides many positive examples of leadership. These leaders and initiatives need to be recognized and supported at the regional and international level.

⁵⁰ Phone interview with Guinea-Bissauan entrepreneur, January 2020.

Annex: Forum Methodology

The Forum on “Localizing the 2030 Agenda: Building on What Works” took place from October 27 to 29, 2019, in Banjul, The Gambia. The forum was jointly organized by the government of The Gambia, the Senegalo-Gambian Permanent Secretariat, the UN country team in The Gambia, the UN Trust Fund for Human Security (UNTFHS), Humanity United, and the International Peace Institute (IPI). It brought together seventy-eight national and local government leaders, UN officials, local champions of sustainable development, entrepreneurs, and representatives of youth and women’s organizations from Côte d’Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Senegal, and Sierra Leone, as well as representatives of regional entities and the international community.

The Forum’s Approach: Building on What Works

The forum was organized to identify good practices and foster new ideas for accelerating progress toward the SDGs from the ground up. It aimed to provide a model for a different way of working toward the SDGs that puts local actors at the center of multi-stakeholder engagement. The focus was on identifying existing processes and mechanisms that enable local development initiatives to emerge and flourish. Informed by the shared belief that recognizing and supporting such initiatives can accelerate the realization of the 2030 Agenda at the local level, the forum encouraged a broad range of partners to consider how they could collaborate to scale up these initiatives in an integrated manner that leaves no one behind.

This approach requires a new mind-set. It requires a shift from working in silos to working as an interconnected system, both horizontally and vertically, while engaging in multi-stakeholder partnerships that go beyond traditional development actors. Rather than focusing on specific SDGs, the forum focused on the systemic approach needed to successfully localize the 2030 Agenda.

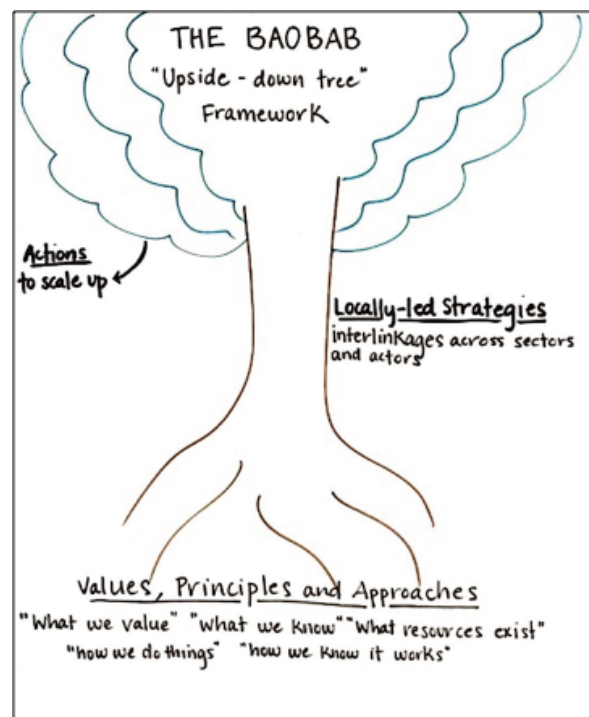
The image of a baobab tree was used to depict this approach. The roots and branches of the tree mirror each other and are similar in size. The roots of the baobab represent local values, principles, and

approaches. These values and principles are often invisible but are the foundation for lasting development and peace. The trunk signifies the alignment and coordination across the different layers of society that are needed to support localization efforts. Finally, the branches represent the initiatives and partnerships that need to be scaled up to achieve the 2030 Agenda.

Overarching Goals: Strengthening the Connection between Local Action and Global Goals

The objectives of the forum were to:

- Generate awareness of existing capacities, knowledge, and mechanisms that West African communities can leverage to deliver local solutions to sustainable development challenges;
- Design localized development strategies that align capacities and partnerships at multiple levels with the goal of accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda; and
- Enable a conversation on the roles that internal and external actors can play to support and scale up local development initiatives in the spirit and the letter of the 2030 Agenda.



As part of the preparatory process, the organizers issued a regional call inviting “champions” who were working to transform their communities to apply to participate in the forum. From the 350 applications received, sixteen champions were selected, two per country. In addition, in consultation with the resident coordinators and UN country teams in the eight countries, a mayor and a national authority responsible for development planning were invited. With the participation of the UN resident coordinators, this made for a total of five participants from each country. Representatives from the international community were also present to ensure linkages between the local, national, regional, and global levels in considering how to accelerate implementation of the 2030 Agenda (see Box 3). This selection process was a key element of the forum’s success.

By bringing together stakeholders from diverse sectors, institutions, and levels of government in each of the eight countries, the forum created a platform for sharing experiences and knowledge that go beyond the forms traditionally shared. This helped move toward the multi-level, multi-sectoral dialogue needed to overcome the complex obstacles to sustainable development at the local and national levels.

Ahead of the forum, the organizers launched a Twitter chat to engage a broader audience on what it means to localize the 2030 Agenda. The chat made more than six million impressions, highlighting the relevance of this topic. Social media is becoming an important platform for engaging a global audience that may not have access to meeting rooms but that makes key contributions to the discussion. People from thirty-five countries, particularly youth, actively participated by sharing their work and insights on how it links to the 2030 Agenda.

To set the stage at the beginning of the forum, the UN deputy secretary-general delivered remarks via video underscoring the importance of the forum and urging participants to seek collaborative solutions and commit to the outcomes of the deliberations.⁵¹ The Gambia’s minister of foreign affairs, Mamadou Tangara, and minister of finance



Forum participants from Côte d'Ivoire discuss the "ingredients" of a locally led, locally owned 2030 Agenda.

and economic affairs, Mambury Njie, also delivered remarks, emphasizing the importance of inclusive partnerships and reiterating their government’s commitment to the success of the forum.

Through facilitated discussions, participants from each country shared innovative and successful solutions to multifaceted development challenges at the local level. They also identified the factors that lay behind this success and considered how the initiatives could be scaled up. Drawing on common values and approaches, participants from each country explored how to leverage and strengthen their individual initiatives through broader partnerships tailored to their local context. In addition, sessions for participants from different countries to exchange their experiences created an environment of peer learning and helped identify areas where support from regional and international actors could strengthen a localized approach to the 2030 Agenda.

Outcomes of the Forum

At the end of the forum, participants from each country agreed on a framework, including key components, mechanisms, and partnerships, for scaling up successful locally led initiatives. Building on this framework, they considered specific actions to foster institutional collaboration, establish or enhance governance arrangements, and create platforms for sustained dialogue across stakeholders at different levels to accelerate progress toward the SDGs at the local and national

⁵¹ The remarks are available at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WRM5JkToDQ8&feature=youtu.be>.

Box 3. Forum participants

Champions: They provided narratives and insights on what works in their country or in the subregion and shared personal experiences on successful local development initiatives that could be scaled up.

Municipal authorities: As intermediaries between community leaders and the central government, and as champions of local development, they shared experiences and insights on the ingredients necessary for successful local initiatives.

National authorities: As the stewards of sustainable development in each country, they provided insights and experiences on efforts to foster institutional collaboration and create ownership across institutions, as well as to mobilize and harness the contributions of a diverse set of stakeholders toward achieving the 2030 Agenda.

UN resident coordinators: They brought experience leveraging the comparative advantage of a wide range of stakeholders toward collaborative action and insights on how the UN country teams could help accelerate progress on the SDGs through locally led strategies.

International participants: They attended the forum to learn and consider how international efforts can help catalyze action at the local level and support the scale-up of successful initiatives through multi-stakeholder partnerships.

levels. Moreover, they identified gaps in communications, partnerships, and processes that need to be bridged in order to advance an inclusive and participatory development strategy that builds on innovations and successes at the local level and works toward national development objectives. Each group committed to three concrete, time-bound follow-up actions to build on the outcomes of the forum and further elaborate the frameworks and strategies discussed.

More broadly, UNTFHS committed to working with the resident coordinators and UN country teams, as well as government and civil society partners, in each of the eight countries to design programs that build on the outcomes of the forum and apply the human security approach to accelerate progress toward the SDGs at the local and national levels. UNTFHS will also offer seed funding and mobilize additional resources to support these programs in all eight countries.

The forum helped increase awareness of existing capacities, knowledge, and mechanisms that could be leveraged in each country and across the region to strengthen the delivery of local solutions to sustainable development challenges. In addition, it enabled a broad and inclusive dialogue on how various internal and external actors can come together to support a ground-up approach that includes people as drivers of sustainable development and community transformation.

The forum presented the opportunity for the participants to inscribe some of the above points into a shared document they called the Banjul Declaration in honor of the host country's capital. The declaration records the wishes and aspirations of the participants and their determination to find the most effective strategies for localizing the 2030 Agenda.

**Banjul Declaration drafted at the forum on
“Localizing the 2030 Agenda: Building on What Works”**

Welcoming the participation of Côte d’Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea, Liberia, Senegal, and Sierra Leone at the [Forum on] Localizing the 2030 Agenda: Building on What Works;

Recognizing the Government of The Gambia for hosting the first sub-regional Forum on Localizing the 2030 Agenda;

Recognizing international organizations such as Senegalo-Gambia Secretariat, the UN Country Teams, UN Human Security Trust Fund, the International Peace Institute and other partners for their efforts and support leading up to a successful first 2030 Agenda Exchange Forum in Banjul;

Also recognizing that some of these lessons can be shared and applied in the region and globally to help accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda;

Acknowledging that the implementation of the 2030 Agenda is a multilevel and multi-stakeholder process that requires a new institutional approach, with inclusive dialogue and a strong complementarity and cooperation among the different spheres of government—local, subnational, national, regional and global—and with the communities they serve and represent;


Underscoring that localization of the SDG[s] is essential to enhance the implementation of the 2030 Agenda through a bottom-up process, where ownership at the subnational and community level is needed, as well as transparent and open governments and mutual accountability, and that the SDGs can offer an integrated framework for local and territorial development;

Recognizing the commitment of the international community [to] the localization of the 2030 Agenda and their support to these bottom-up approaches in coordination with government and regional organizations within the context of the Paris Declaration of Aid Effectiveness;

Noting that 2020 starts the decade of delivery and that we only have 10 years to achieve the goals and targets;

We, the eight countries that met in Banjul, have decided to commit to the following actions:

1. Commit to the localization of the 2030 Agenda by strengthening local institutions [and] building capacities of communities;
2. Commit to accelerating community development through innovative, inclusive and participatory approaches;
3. Commit to an annual Exchange Forum to take stock of progress and lessons learned; [and]
4. Commit to leading the support mechanism that would localize the 2030 Agenda and align international aid with domestic resources to scale-up in a sustainable and lasting way for greater impact.



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