

IPPN Knowledge Café on UN Support to Rights-based Voluntary National Reviews

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1. Context

Guinea-Bissau is a multi-party republic. The country faced a protracted political impasse punctuated by tumultuous periods.

The State of Guinea-Bissau, as part of the concert of nations, ratified the most of the United Nations treaties on human rights, namely the Pact International on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Pact International on Civil and Political Rights, which include both an obligation equality and non-discrimination. The country's experience of consultations Regional carried out in the context of the preparation of the National Review report Volunteer (VNR), was a very participatory process that allowed to draw conclusions on the actual state of implementation of the SDGs.

VNR seen not only as a rapporteur but also as a process:

- an open, transparent process, including the participation of various stakeholders, including civil society organizations, the private sector, the media, women's and young people's groups and other more vulnerable groups;
- Regional consultations were held in nine regions of the country, including the capital Bissau;
- The consultations were aimed at providing a space for the various stakeholders to express their views on the level of implementation of the SDGs, enabling dialogue between right holders and holders of obligations to build consensus on the country's situation in terms of implementing the 2030 Agenda;
- The regional consultations allowed a dialogue not only between central and regional state entities, but also between them and the local population, especially those left behind.

2. Methodology

The methodology used, allowed giving voice to the most vulnerable people, as well as identify gaps in the implementation of the SDGs, that is, what remains to be done. Define a data collection strategy to measure the state of implementation of 2030 agenda, focusing on bridging the gaps identified in statistics country officials. Organization of group discussions with key actors and target populations regional level. The obtaining of primary data through group discussions with the representatives of the organizations involved in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in each region and target populations, beneficiaries that allowed among other things:

Raise awareness of the importance and objectives of the 2030 Agenda. Use the participatory approach to identify the SDGs that are priorities for the different target communities, as well as their preferences regarding how achieve them. The collective appropriation of projects and

actions aimed at implement the SDGs in each community, as well as the verification of capabilities for their development and management.

Use the participatory approach to identify difficulties, needs, and capabilities that organizations involved in implementing the 2030 Agenda confrontation in each region. Identify the main weaknesses, threats, forces and opportunities that each region presents when it comes to achieving the SDGs. It is essential to establish differentiated regional strategies variety of cases and situations that exist in Guinea-Bissau, allowing an approach to each context. Taking into account these factors will increase significantly the probability of success of actions and projects aimed at implement the 2030 Agenda approach to each context. Taking into account these factors will increase significantly the probability of success of actions and projects aimed at implement the 2030 Agenda.

Estimate, at least qualitatively, the level of implementation of the SDGs in each region.

The following questions were raised in plenary: At first, discussions were held in plenary, in which participants were invited to express their views on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in Guinea-Bissau, in particular the SDGs, with based on the following guiding questions, according to the methodology Onusian known as the "Human Rights Based Approach":

What is the situation? What are the problems?

Who else suffers? And why?

What is the solution?

Who has to do what?

In a second phase, working groups were organized in which the participants were invited to reflect on the themes. In some regions, participants were divided into three groups (i) Women (ii) Civil Society and (iii) State entities and the choice of issues to refer was left to the discretion of the groups. There was a plenary restitution of the group work. A representative of each group presented a summary of their debates, giving an opportunity to to your group members to add something. Each group was invited to summarize your discussion based on the following points: the main ones problems; affected groups and specific manifestations, causes and solutions to the problems.

3. Results: What we learn from the integration of human rights
in the VNR process?

1. The COVID-19 pandemic has aggravated a socio-economic situation already difficult, aggravating existing social inequalities and the failure of institutions in ensuring essential basic services to populations living in situations of vulnerability and poverty (SDG 1 and SDG 10).

2. Women and children, who together account for more than half of population, are exposed to all types of shocks, including caused by the health, economic and climate crisis. Within this group, there are even more neglected groups of people: people with disability, people living with HIV-AIDS, children from families in extreme poverty, families headed by women in the countryside and older women, among others (SDG 16 & 17).

3. In addition to suffering multiple forms of discrimination, women and girls continue to be victims of multiple forms of violence, such as: forced and early marriage, female genital mutilation, harassment and other sexual abuse. Civil society is committed to redoubling their efforts to combat violence against women and girls in all its forms.
4. The health sector, already deeply weakened by a chronic lack of investment and still suffering from strikes, suffered a additional pressure as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The children continue to die from preventable diseases. Access to basic health care remains a challenge for communities (SDG 3, 4 and 13).
5. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the educational sector was tormented by strikes that prevented many children from going to school, as well as lack of investment in necessary infrastructure, human resources and development of a quality curriculum. (SDG 4), which aims at quality education, is essential to achieve all other SDGs and therefore should be considered a priority absolute.
6. Although Guinea-Bissau has abundant natural resources, the country is classified at the bottom of the human development index. Natural resources such as the sea and forests are exploited without due control and without benefiting local communities.
7. The development of Guinea-Bissau requires investment in agriculture (SDG 2, SDG 12). The latter should aim at not only its mechanization, but also its diversification. This effort should be accompanied by investments in industry to preserve and transform agricultural products to create benefit and combat poverty (SDG 8, SDG 9).
8. The development of Guinea-Bissau and, in particular, the reduction of glaring regional inequalities in access to basic services requires greater investment in infrastructure to promote economic development and access to basic services for all has an affordable and equitable cost (SDG 9 and SDG 10).
9. Access to drinking water (SDG 6) remains a daily struggle to many Guineans. This responsibility also falls on the shoulders of women and girls who need to walk kilometers to dawn to fetch a few liters of water. Face this challenge would also help promote other SDGs, such as (SDG 5) on gender equality.
10. The fight against impunity is also essential for the achievement of (SDG 16). Achieving SDG 16 involves investing in stronger institutions, more effective, responsible and inclusive at all levels, as this would facilitate access to justice for all, fair and gender-neutral justice or biased in favor of the powerful.
11. Despite the progress made in recent years, particularly at the level legislative and political, gender equality remains undefined for many women, especially in rural areas (SDG 5). The contribution of women to gross domestic product is immense, since they are the engine of the informal economy. However, women still struggle to be brought to the negotiating table on key issues of development, peace and security. This situation persists despite the law adopted in 2018. Without these measures to ensure that women can realize their potential and participate fully in development of the country, Guinea-Bissau will not be able to various SDGs, including (SDG 5)