Preamble:

If the implementation of the 2030 Agenda is to be reached as envisioned by the international community, the implementation of the principle of ‘Leave No One Behind (LNOB)’ has to be at the forefront of all development efforts. Thus, it should be an essential part of every development intervention. This prioritisation needs to be reflected in development plans, implementation strategies and policy frameworks. Inclusion should not be a tick-box agenda. Instead, the principles of LNOB should be brought in as a cross-cutting commitment to localising the SDGs and be applied to all targets.

Recommendations

- The principle of LNOB should be underpinned with a clear set of indicators in order to allow for a monitoring of the implementation and the reporting of the progress. This would be especially desirable regarding some of the most vulnerable groups whose needs are not yet fully reflected in the set SDG targets and indicators.

- National development strategies should be aligned with the 2030 Agenda and at the same time leave enough room for political decisions at the local level. The question, which groups to specifically focus on and where to set priorities can best be answered at the local level. Accordingly, the local level needs adequate funding coming from the national level for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In the ideal case, there should also be local streams of revenue to fund some of the implementation efforts independently from the national level and from development partners.

- National and local systems should be used for a better exchange between institutions on how to commonly promote the 2030 Agenda. Wherever this is not the case, local associations could play an important role in strengthening these systems on the local level. In some contexts, it might make sense to think about better mechanisms for exchange between local actors, development partners, and stakeholders. New forms of consultation and more advanced formats for mutual learning could promote the replication or modification of successful approaches and experiences how to identify the ones most vulnerable in societies. It is of great importance to realise that the integrated and transformative character of the 2030 Agenda requires multiple levels of government to collaborate across sectors. This goes not only for the implementation, but also for the reporting and monitoring of the progress.

- The quality and the quantity of available data on the localisation of the SDGs need to be increased. This will improve local government’s ability to cater specifically to the needs of the ones left behind furthest. One key factor are capacity development efforts regarding the disaggregation of data and technical support regarding the completion of Voluntary National Reviews. Improving the capacities of people and institutions is of utmost importance for the achievement of the whole agenda.
• The Development Partners Network on Decentralisation & Local Governance (DeLoG) should make effective use of its members’ and partners’ expertise in localising the 2030 Agenda. A stronger focus should be put on the principle of LNOB. The networks’ experience should contribute to capacity development efforts to enable local actors to participate in Voluntary National Review processes in their respective countries.

• Participation is key! Increase ownership! Local communities, local entrepreneurs, and other important stakeholders such as faith-based groups should have an important say in the “What?” and the “How?” of the implementation at the local level. Stakeholder dialogues and public hearings could be formats to increase the ownership of local communities affected.

• Efforts to raise awareness for the importance of LNOB among policy makers and the broad public need to be accelerated! We call on civil society organisations, decision makers and the media to put the SDGs and the principle of LNOB high on their agenda and to help gather publicity and support for this important cause.

• Better data for more transparency! Acquiring more data of better quality will help create more transparency regarding the SDGs and their implementation. This will increase the accountability of those responsible on the local and national level.