

*Unfortunately, Annika Lindblom, the General-Secretary of the Finnish sustainable development Council couldn't make it yet to HLPF.

*She sends her best regards and wishes us a successful workshop.

*Instead of her, I do my best to share our views on how the Governments can develop and deliver the national sustainable strategies with the help of national Councils of sustainable development and other multi-stakeholder platforms.

1. Finland's Council has its own characteristics which enables the delivery of the national sustainable development strategy implementation:

*it is led by the Prime Minister – the whole Government needs to involve!

'Since 1992 already 7 different Prime Ministers have engaged in the work.

*Council has also very broad membership.

It includes around 50 representatives from the – for 4 years (parliament elections every 4 years):

'business and industry,

'labor unions,

'non-governmental organisations like women, children, environment, development, indigenous peoples Saami, Somali immigrants, sports, education, consumers, disabled peoples' associations

'and as well representatives from municipalities, regions,

'church and

'research /academia.

comment on GUNTERS' point: President or director level engagement is important but demanding approach. e.g. Employer Organisation presented by the President but he never participates. On the other hand, other employer federations are active – and have a member from Expert level.

*Finnish Commission is not an "advisory council" as are many Councils in Europe and in the world, but rather a "partnership forum".

-) The Government, civils society and the stakeholders convene together for a meaningful discussion.

'Stakeholders pose questions and raise their concerns to the Government members directly

-And the Government needs to respond directly.

'For example, the SAK has impressed its concern about the otherwise advanced s.d budgeting for the Chair of the Council/PM since it is missing the social dimension.

-) We believe that this type of a dialogue is more efficient in sustainable development issues than the traditional hearing/consultation process.

(which is of course also needed in many cases for official procedures).

2. In reaching out public, citizens, private sector and other actors in the society, the Prime Minister's Office has created new mechanisms, tools and platforms. I will introduce three of them:

comment on GUNTERS points: SD grassroots action week in Finland too!

a) So far, the most important tool in Finland to boost participation, concrete action and innovations for sustainable development is so called 'Society's Commitment to Sustainable Development'.

*It provides a long-term sustainable development policy framework for the public administration, civil society and other stakeholders up until 2050.

*It also provides an implementation tool for anyone in Finland to participate in the 2030 Agenda with a concrete action.

*By now, there are almost 2 000 commitments from all spheres of the society.

Pias' own point: you need to be careful not to misuse the comments. There is e.g. possibility by companies to greenwash because there are no resources to follow-up.

*Private companies and schools have been the most active partners.

-) Central TU Organisations in Finland have prepared a training material for their Training Centres and for their Unions to help the Members to make their own workplaces more sustainable.

*As part of the Society's Commitment, a Sustainable Lifestyle -service has been developed for citizens to pursue a more sustainable everyday life.

'There, Users can first calculate their own personal carbon footprint and then draw up a personal plan to reduce it by choosing suitable actions from a recommended selection of smart choices.

*Every individual plan contributes to the national emissions reduction target.

b) We have a #monitoring" seminar on the state and the future of the national sustainable development

*Once a year, so far in May, there has been a seminar where the implementation of the national strategy has been discussed and debated.

The development is followed mainly by the app. 50 national indicators created in co-operation with the stakeholders.

*This year the seminar concentrated on the SDGs of the 2019 HLPF (decent work, education, reduction of inequality, peace and climate change) having the youth as an overarching theme.

*Since one of the topics was decent work, also TUs participated to the preparations of the seminar.

*Also, civil society NGOs were involved.

'the seminar was sponsored by the PM office.

Parliament hearing, in spring too, also in the form of seminar about the up-date of the national strategy, where Finland stands!

c)The first s.c. national Citizens' Panel for Sustainable Development was established in December 2018.

*The task of each panelist (anybody could apply!) was to assess the current state and recent development of sustainable development in Finland, by using an online assessment tool and a fourfold table.

*The assessment was made individually for each of Finland's 50 national sustainable development indicators, based on indicator data, specific expert analyses, and citizens' comments on indicators and analysis.

*Some 500 panelists completed the whole questionnaire.

3. Councils for Sustainable Development are necessary tools for the Governments to implement the SDGs!

*well-functioning Council avoids the silo approach in implementing the SDGs,

*it also ensures the policy coherence and a systemic whole-of-the-society approach

*Besides, the Councils can raise issues that are cross-sectoral and horizontal in nature,

*they can also tackle trade-offs and synergies

*Most importantly the Councils create common understanding in the issues that are controversial in nature, conflicts of interests can be made visible.

-) Instead of adding problems the Councils can either avoid them totally or provide solutions to overcome the difficult, controversial topics.