

SUMMARY REPORT

What Brings Us Together

Multi-stakeholder Sessions at the 2018 OECD DevCom Annual Meeting

OECD Headquarters, 21 November 2018

EVENT OVERVIEW

The 2018 [DevCom](#) Annual Meeting marked DevCom's 30th Birthday. Under the heading of *What Brings Us Together*, the meeting was an occasion to celebrate three decades of peer learning and collaboration. More importantly, it was an opportunity to address new challenges and identify ways forward.

As in previous years, the first day was devoted to a series of **multi-stakeholder sessions**. A diverse group of more than [80 senior participants](#) addressed three main questions:

- How can communications & campaigning help **promote gender equality**?
- How can we **engage businesses as SDG advocates**?
- As DevCom turns 30, how do we need to **change the way we talk about development**?

Please find below the highlights of the multi-stakeholder sessions. In 2019, we will share key messages from each session in diverse dialogue forums related to private sector engagement and gender equality.

Thank you for attending our 2018 Annual Meeting!

**Share your feedback and ideas with us,
and make DevCom your go-to platform to exchange with peers around the world**

Email: Dev.com@oecd.org

Website: www.oecd.org/dev/devcom

SDG Blog: www.sdg-communicator.org

EMnet: www.oecd.org/dev/oecdemnet

WELCOME REMARKS

To open the event, [Gabriela Ramos](#), OECD Chief of Staff and G20 Sherpa, shared [welcome remarks](#) on how to communicate about contentious subjects like migration and multilateralism in a digital world. "As communicators, we need to create narratives that people are inspired by, that they can believe in, to empower people to contribute to a better world, rather than giving up."

MORNING WORKSHOP: COMMUNICATING FOR GENDER EQUALITY AND SDG 5

Award-winning TV presenter [Annette Young](#) delivered a powerful keynote speech on [#The51%](#), a programme that tells stories of women re-shaping the world. She stressed the need to continue increasing the presence of women in the media, both as TV presenters and as expert interviewees. She also highlighted the need to tell more personal stories.

Ms. Young went on to moderate an interactive panel discussion:

- ODI's [Caroline Harper](#) shared insights on progress in transforming gender norms. As an example of progress, boys with a secondary education have more gender-equal views today. Two areas where progress has been slowest are women's economic empowerment and the reduction of sexual violence. Progress in these areas depends on men relinquishing power and control of assets. For example, while access to digital technology can be a means to empowerment, it can also be a source of control, with many women and girls still depending on men for access to mobile phones.
- Promundo's [Giovanna Lauro](#) shared the results of a survey in 40 countries, which found that younger, more educated and urban men tend to be improving their attitudes towards women. However, the media still perpetuates traditional ideas of masculine norms and stereotypes of caregiving and docile women, as found by Promundo and Axe's [The Man Box](#) report.
- Girl Effect's [Kecia Bertermann](#) reflected on the importance of providing a safe space for dialogue and discussion for girls. Girl Effect's new mobile application [Springster](#) is connecting marginalised and vulnerable girls around the world and allowing them to ask questions and connect. She emphasized that while girls still have unequal access to cell phones and internet access, digital tools are still an important way to maximize the impact of gender equality campaigns.

[Lucia Burtnik](#) of the [Y20](#) moderated a dynamic set of group exercises, encouraging groups to consider Dao Nguyen's analysis on [what makes content go viral](#). According to [Nguyen](#), viral content: makes people laugh; helps people explain who they are; helps people describe their bond with others; helps people do or learn something; restores people's faith in the world.

Several further recommendations emerged from the morning's discussions:

- ✓ ***Incorporate the voices of men and boys:*** It is crucial to include men in the conversation about gender equality, and encourage them to intervene if they witness violence. However, beware of the risk of reinforcing patriarchal systems in the way the campaign represents men.
- ✓ ***Foster partnerships:*** Let others come on board and amplify your cause, rather than trying to "be the hero" yourself. Pursue strategic partnerships across different sectors.
- ✓ ***Build in reflection time:*** Campaigns work best when audiences are given time to reflect on the campaign's messages with their peers.
- ✓ ***Talk with people, not at them,*** giving audiences a voice and providing platforms for dialogue.
- ✓ ***Go visual and share personal experiences.***

[Katja Iverson](#), President and CEO of [Women Deliver](#), delivered a [special video message](#) with three key messages about empowering women: make information easily accessible; pass the microphone to the women and girls themselves; work across issues and sectors to avoid echo chambers.

To close the morning workshop, [Latifa Belmahdi](#) of Global Affairs Canada presented Canada's [Feminist International Assistance Policy](#), which drew on large-scale public consultations. She also encouraged communicators to make stronger use of social media analytics before choosing messengers and messages. She invited all participants to join the [2019 Women Deliver Conference](#) in Vancouver on 3-6 June 2019.

AFTERNOON WORKSHOP: BUSINESSES AS SDG ADVOCATES

In the afternoon of Day 1, DevCom joined forces with its sister network, the [Emerging Markets Network](#) (EMnet), for a joint **Workshop on Businesses as SDG Advocates**.

[Jahda Swanborough](#) of the World Economic Forum moderated a panel on SDG awareness in the private sector, the evolution of demand for sustainability among consumers and employees, and public-private partnerships for sustainable policies.

- [Julia Gambarini](#) and [Indalecio Perez](#) of [Inditex](#), one of the world’s largest fashion retailers, agreed that there had been a shift in consumer demand, public awareness and media scrutiny. A growing number of consumers submit queries on social media about cotton sourcing and factory conditions abroad. Ms. Gambarini invited participants to learn about [Join Life](#), Inditex’ sustainable garment line. Mr. Perez stressed the importance of support from senior-level leadership in ensuring that businesses focus on the SDGs. Integrating SDG reporting into businesses has been helpful in securing internal buy-in.
- [Giulia Di Tommaso](#) of [Ferrero](#) saw the SDGs as an opportunity to reconcile commercial and ethical values. Millennial consumers look for meaning behind the products they purchase, and today’s brands must transmit an authentic sense of purpose. Ferrero has launched an internal program linking business projects to specific SDGs. Ferrero also supports [One Young World](#), an association that brings together young business leaders passionate about social change. Ms. Di Tommaso highlighted the challenge of improving standards along the value chain, noting Ferrero’s commitment to buy ethically sourced and certified cocoa and palm oil.
- [Charlotte Portier](#) of the [Global Reporting Initiative](#) said that the SDGs have been valuable in providing concrete benchmarks for companies to standardise their sustainable development initiatives. New businesses in particular have been integrating sustainability from the beginning. Ms. Portier called for better dissemination of best reporting practices and success stories, welcoming a [KPMG report](#) with guidance on SDG reporting. GRI has created a [database](#) of sustainability reports, linking business disclosures to specific SDG targets.

Following the panel, a series of roundtable group discussions provided an opportunity for participants to discuss success factors and challenges in engaging businesses as SDG advocates. Several representatives of the private sector shared specific initiatives and experiences:

- **ManpowerGroup** has a programme encouraging employees to volunteer a day of their time to social outreach initiatives. In countries like India, ManpowerGroup is also taking measures to promote gender parity in recruitment.
- As part of its Corporate Social Responsibility Roadmap for 2017-2020, **Orange** seeks to promote the use of digital technology as a tool for economic, social and environmental development. This work is informed by stakeholder dialogues conducted in more than 20 countries.
- **Société Générale** is developing new “positive impact” products that tie loans to a client’s achievements in terms of social and corporate responsibility targets.
- **ING** is committed to sourcing 100% green electricity by 2020.
- At the **International Chamber of Commerce**, senior leadership and staff have committed to act as internal ambassadors for their favourite SDG, underlining their commitment through a photograph with the chosen SDG icon.

Participants welcomed the opportunity to share perspectives across sectors. After all, SDG communicators in public and private institutions have **much in common**: they need to **build public trust by demonstrating progress** in sustainable development; they need to **galvanise action** among diverse audiences; and they need to **engage with internal sceptics** who often have competing policy or business objectives.

At the same time, the discussions revealed the need for more **mutual understanding between public and private actors**. Public actors voiced concerns about “SDG washing”, while private actors called for stronger

leadership from governments on sustainability. For example, if governments do not add human rights clauses to trade agreements, then businesses have fewer incentives to improve labour conditions in the supply chain.

Participants agreed that **better impact measures** for SDG initiatives, for example through certification or “SDG scores”, would help build mutual trust. For businesses, this could mean using the SDGs as reporting tools; for governments, it could mean using the SDGs as a tool for budgeting and policy targets.

The discussion on impact measures highlighted another common source of misunderstanding between public and private actors: **different vocabulary**. The public sector’s “development results” are the private sector’s “key performance indicators” and “benchmarks”.

Most participants agreed that more could be done to develop **joint narratives** about the SDGs, reducing misconceptions and knowledge gaps about different sectors. This could involve:

- ✓ **Reporting on progress together** and sourcing positive stories about private sector contributions. Colombia, for example, devotes a major section of its [Voluntary National Review](#) (7.2) to the role of the private sector, documenting how 70 companies are helping achieve the SDGs.
- ✓ **More dialogue at the national level**. Several countries have established official national platforms to engage with businesses about the SDGs, helping source both positive examples of private sector contributions and areas for improvement.

Participants also identified principles and ideas for effective SDG campaigns and communications:

- ✓ **Choose effective messengers**. CEOs and government ministers are not always best-placed to bring the message across.
- ✓ **Adapt content to audiences**. While SDG reporting data and benchmarks may work for some audiences, most people respond better to local stories about human beings behind the issues.
- ✓ **Boot out the jargon**. Each community has their jargon and acronyms (e.g. SDGs; KPIs; benchmarks etc.), but agendas and acronyms don’t work well with the general public.
- ✓ **Work on shorter formats**. Videos and reports are still too long and indigestible!
- ✓ **Develop internal training and encourage volunteering programmes** to promote ownership and mobilise SDG champions across government and business departments.

The DevCom and EMnet teams will explore further opportunities for public-private dialogue and learning on development communications in 2019.

EVENING SESSION: DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATIONS: OUR VOCATION IN TRANSITION

In the final session of Day 1, participants reflected on 30 years of DevCom. The Guardian’s [Lucy Lamble](#) moderated a panel discussion about the many ways in which both development narratives and communications challenges have changed in recent years.

- [Mwanja Nganjo](#) of the [African Union Development Agency](#) called for more positive stories on Africa, in support of [Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want](#). She emphasised the importance of citizens consultations in the design of both programmes and communication strategies. She highlighted the communications challenges of low media and internet access on the African continent.
- [Mathilde Schneider](#) explained that the [AFD](#) has begun framing its work in terms of “investment” rather than “assistance” – new forms of development co-operation require a new language. Reflecting on today’s media landscape, Ms. Schneider highlighted the growing challenge of tailoring specific messages for target audiences, and building relationships with a fragmented media.
- [David Kruger](#) discussed how the focus of the [Asian Development Bank](#) had expanded beyond poverty reduction to challenges like climate change and financing infrastructure. He highlighted the new challenges of leveraging digital platforms like WeChat and shifting to video formats.
- The OECD’s [Chiara Di Stefano](#) highlighted the need to find allies in civil society to engage citizens for international co-operation. She noted that in today’s political climate, increasing transparency and explaining policies in more accessible language.

The general discussion session raised a number of ideas and recommendations:

- **Find the right spokesperson:** look for messengers that are both warm and competent. Volunteers and front-line workers score well; political leaders are less well received by general audiences.
- **Engage new audiences:** expand your reach, rather than just speaking to those who are already knowledgeable about international development co-operation. Only a small number of organisations have begun to engage with social media influencers.
- **Think about the long-term impact of different narratives:** in the short term, some audiences may be attracted to the message that aid will stem migration flows. However, longer-term support will fall if, as research suggests, (a) stemming migration actually undermines development processes; and (b) aid proves unable to stem migration flows. Several participants called for a more positive narrative on migration.

CLOSING REMARKS

[Mario Pezzini](#), Director of the [OECD Development Centre](#) and Special Adviser to the OECD Secretary General on Development closed the Multi-stakeholder Sessions by welcoming a broader dialogue about development communication. Development is in transition, and the way we communicate about development must transition as well. If “development” can no longer be equated with “aid”, then we need more diverse countries and stakeholders to share their perspectives, narratives and ideas. Multilateral co-operation and new partnerships are the best way to fight populism and nationalism, and citizens need to be convinced now more than ever that international co-operation and partnerships are the way forward.