

Making Data Processing more transparent, inclusive, and participatory that will be shaping the UN Summit of the Future

Raymond Saner, CSEND, Geneva, 26th March 2024

The Summit of the Future (SOTF) will take place in September 2024. As the negotiations presumably will be contentious and as the organizers' seek CSO participation to show evidence of multi-stakeholder participation, the outcome and the process of for CSO inputs appear unclear. There are general calls by the UN organizers inviting CSOs to provide inputs through consultations during the preparatory phases leading up to the UN Summit for the Future and to the three main outcome documents of the SOTF namely a) the Pact for the Future (Pact), b) the Declaration on Future Generations (DoFG) and c) the Global Digital Compact (GDC)

A meeting has been announced for CSO participation during May 2024 in Nairobi, Kenya. It will, however, take place after many of the negotiations on the documents for the Summit have reached an advanced stage, which will limit the impact that CSOs can have. It is also difficult to see how much one single meeting held at this advanced stage can provide an effective conduit for CSOs, particularly as participation will be limited by funding available, in the case of developing country CSOs or by the constraints developed country CSOs are facing with funding.

At this stage, the program of the Nairobi conference is vague; responsibilities are not clear; and there are no suggestions as to how CSOs can participate in the Nairobi meeting and how the meeting's outcomes will be summarized, including by whom, by when, and how the NGO inputs will be fed into the SOTF, Pact, DoFG and GDC processes and whether the 11 policy briefs of the UN call for CSO inputs will be used as data categories for the analysis of the data collected from CSOs.

There is no clarification as to who will collect the data, and whether these communications will be stored in a transparent manner other than being posted on the UN Summit of the Future or other websites. Furthermore, there are no indication as to how the collected data will be analysed; whether the collected data will be made available publically, and how the analysis of the NGO data will be included in the Summit resolution.

Taking the above into account, consideration should be given to procedures that will ensure that the data inputs / key points from civil society will be fully and transparently available to avoid digital black box traps where data is collected without transparency regarding data processing and data analysis nor explanations as to how the final data analysis and related report has been constructed. Furthermore, in light of the increased use of AI and generalized non-specified ITC communications, steps need to be taken to make AI-based interactions between the UN and CSOs as transparent, inclusive, participatory, and accountable as possible.