



Bringing Added Value to the High Level Political Forum: A High Level Representative for Future Generations

The objective of a High Level Representative for Future Generations (HLR) is to balance the short-term nature of policy making processes and act as the UN's principal advocate for the interests and needs of future generations. They would evaluate policy proposals for their impact on the lives of future generations, inviting a common vision and responsibility. He or she would be an individual with the leadership skills, the moral authority and vision to set an agenda in which the needs of future generations are considered *alongside* present interests.

The HLR would work alongside the High Level Political Forum, giving support and facilitation to the Forum's specific roles and functions rather than a monitoring role upon the members. The additional perspective of shining a light upon the needs and interests of future generations and by helping to promote holistic, interconnected approaches would strengthen and add further legitimacy to decisions and outcomes of the Forum. The means and mechanisms by which the Forum addresses intergenerational equity is critical to ensure its impact.

How?

Most importantly through providing a visual figurehead, attached to the work and functions of the Forum, who is easily identified by the public at large. An individual, tasked with the role of HLR would be expected to bring the necessary leadership, moral authority and inspirational direction, adding essential visibility and support to the issues at hand and the work to the outside world. The HLR would help the High Level Forum to meet its objectives (and with facilitating implementation on the ground), but it would also liaise with other UN agencies, international institutions, and treaty secretariats to ensure enhanced international cooperation and coherence on matters falling within the scope of his or her mission.

In that regard it would be a flexible and responsive point of entry. By working with other UN organs and agencies, scientific and research bodies, and independent institutions, the HLR can facilitate and navigate informed, impartial discussions and agreements made by the Forum and for its own work.

Through acting as an entry point, not only co-ordinating with the Major Groups and other relevant stakeholders seeking to participate with the Forum, but by being visible to the public at the national level, it would help contribute much needed trust to the UN system, the Forum and its functions. Without the HLR, the public would see a High Level Forum as 'another institution' with the likely perception that it is not representative, accessible or transparent.

A HLR could perform particular duties, to help inform and guide the work and decisions of the Forum. They should be mandated to explore and pursue an agenda which helps to feed into and bring further insights to the work and outcomes of the new body. This could cover practical

areas such as capacity building and support mechanisms to address implementation gaps. They could facilitate a broader discourse, for example stimulating innovative economic thinking that calculates apparent short-term economic costs as vital investments for future risk prevention, better contributing towards sustainable development and poverty reduction. They could not propose new rules or change the law or have a right to veto. Crucially, national sovereignty would not be infringed upon. Indeed its mandate would be agreed by Member States.

Through its visibility, the HLR, supported by a small staff (3-4 people) can help bring additional authority and accountability to agreed goals and commitments. Working with the drivers and agencies on the ground, the HLR can encourage a sense of ownership to the agenda – that we are all responsible for interacting in the implementation of solutions.

The HLR would be expected to report annually to the General Assembly. This provides an important function of presenting on its activities, in that way being fully accountable. More importantly it would raise the issues of concern at the highest level, setting out on progress made and pointing to remaining challenges, policy gaps and omissions etc.

The HLR should be located such that its own independence is not compromised, allowing sufficient powers and responsibilities, and raising attention at the highest level.

Proposals for the powers and responsibilities of the HLR could complement very well with the High Level Political Forum:

- International agenda-setting and leadership. To enhance international cooperation and co-ordination on matters falling within the scope of his or her mission, including through liaison with existing international institutions, treaty secretariats, and international initiatives.
- To help develop proposals for new initiatives for the protection of future generations. On request from the United Nations or any of its subsidiary organs, specialized agencies, or affiliated organizations, to offer advice on implementation of existing intergovernmental commitments to or recognition of future generations.
- Facilitate participation of Major Groups and other relevant stakeholders. To act as an advocate for, and to promote and facilitate, the engagement and participation of civil society in the identification and resolution of issues falling within the mission.
- Capacity for institutional innovation at national and subnational levels. On request from governments or civil society groups, to work to build capacity at national and/or subnational levels on matters falling within the scope of his or her overall mission, including through support, where requested, for the establishment of national level Commissioners, Guardians or Ombudsmen for Future Generations, or for convening events or other forums for sharing best practices.
- Promote understanding and gathering evidence. Help identify independent research and analytical excellence in order to promote learning and clarification leading to impartial and informed decisions and to facilitate an effective science policy interface. Create space for interaction in order to rebuild trust and understanding in scientific advice and information.

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