

International Year of Participation - 2022

Call for action

The International Association for Public Participation (**IAP2**) invites civil society organisations, business, academia, and media associations to support a call for international recognition and focus on participation to increase social, economic and environmental outcomes for all, including our most vulnerable communities, and the achievement of the SDGs.

A draft Resolution is below, that builds on previous UN and related resolutions - supporting the call for an International Year of Participation.

Please bring the draft Resolution to the attention of your government to facilitate the International Year of Participation to be declared.

Partnering to achieve the SDGs

IAP2 and UNESCAP have been working together in partnership for several years to promote systematic, quality participation of stakeholders and the public, to help governments and others who lead and design engagement processes to develop structured, well-planned and meaningful participation.

Promoting well-planned and meaningful participation contributes towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development and its framework of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Why an International Year of Participation?

Participation is central to achieving the SDGs and is intrinsic to **Goal 16: Peace, Justice and strong Institutions** and **Goal 17: Partnerships for the Goals**.

An International Year of Participation will:

- Encourage transformational change required by:
 - increasing human and institutional capacity;
 - improving institutional adaptability and agility;
 - building social justice and the momentum for change;
 - Partnering for meaningful and innovative research;
 - Tapping into next-generation solutions; and
 - Injecting new vigour into civic participation/engagement efforts, through education and building capacity to address the shrinking space of civil society.
- Empower vulnerable groups to increase their level of social equality, inclusion and participation
- Build international cooperation and partnerships in tackling the huge socio-economic impacts of a global health crisis, such as COVID-19 pandemic.

What could we achieve with an International Year of Participation?

1. Build awareness and focus attention on an enabling environment for engagement and public participation;
2. Build capacity for engagement, benefitting from proven methods;
3. Mobilise engagement and public participation to support the 2030 Agenda and achievement of the SDGs; and
4. To contribute to the health and wellbeing of all and build peace, dignity and equality on a healthy planet

Declarations, global standards and guidelines that support participation

There are many standards and guidelines that exist to support participation of stakeholders in decisions that impact them. These standards encourage a closed loop feedback mechanism and also provide modalities for measurable engagement. The standards and guidelines (indicative list) together with other tools and resources would be promoted as part of the **International Year of Participation** to build capacity for engagement for the delivery of the 2030 Agenda.

- **Human Rights:** Universal Declaration of Human Rights; Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
- **Social Justice and Responsibility:** International Covenant on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights, ISO 26000: 2010 Social Responsibility
- **Leave no one behind:** International Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination; Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women; Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; Convention on the Rights of a Child;
- **Participation and Engagement:** IAP2 Quality Assurance Standard for Community and Stakeholder Engagement; The IFC Stakeholder Engagement Guideline Handbook 2007; The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development engagement model; Stakeholder Engagement Standard AA1000
- **Increasing democracy:** International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
- **Sustainability:** Convention on Climate Change; Paris Agreement; Kyoto Protocol; 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development and its framework of Sustainable Development Goals, World Bank Environmental and Social Framework 2018, GRI Sustainability Report Framework.

About IAP2

The International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) is a global NGO which seeks to promote and improve the practice of public participation or community and stakeholder engagement. The organisation incorporates individuals, governments, institutions and other entities that affect the public interest throughout the world.

As an international leader in public participation, IAP2 has developed tools that are widely used and acknowledged. These are the *Core Values for Public Participation* for use in the development and implementation of public participation processes; the *IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum* which assists with the selection of the level of participation that defines the public's role in any community engagement program; and, the *Quality Assurance Standard for Community and Stakeholder Engagement* which is recognised as the international standard for public participation practice.

Draft Resolution for an International Year of Participation - 2022

Recalling Article 21 of Resolution 217A, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted on 10 December, 1948, article 25 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, as well as relevant articles in the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women, the International Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination, and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, in which the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family to participate in public affairs are recognized;

Reaffirming its resolution 70/1 of 25 September 2015, entitled “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, in which it adopted a comprehensive, far-reaching and people-centred set of universal and transformative Sustainable Development Goals and targets, its commitment to the full implementation of the Agenda by 2030, its recognition that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development, its commitment to achieving sustainable development in its three dimensions – economic, social and environmental – in a balanced and integrated manner;

Guided in particular by SDG 16 Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels - Targets 16.7 Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels and 16.8 Broaden and strengthen the participation of developing countries in the institutions of global governance, while recognizing that participation is essential for the achievement of the entire set of sustainable development goals.

Recognizing that opportunities for people to influence their lives and future, participate in decision-making and voice their concerns are achievement of the sustainable development goals and are fundamental for sustainable development, and that this can only be achieved with a broad alliance of people, governments, civil society and the private sector, all working together;

Emphasizing that implementation of the 2030 Agenda will require a revitalised global partnership for sustainable development, based on a spirit of strengthened global solidarity, focussed in particular on the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable and with the participation of all countries, all stakeholders and all people;

Reaffirming also its resolutions 53/199 of 15 December 1998 and 61/185 of 20 December 2006 on the proclamation of international years, and Economic and Social Council resolution 1980/67 of 25 July 1980 on international years and anniversaries, particularly paragraphs 1 to 10 of the annex thereto on the agreed criteria for the proclamation of international years, as well as paragraphs 13 and 14, in which it is stated that an international day or year should not be proclaimed before the basic arrangements for its organization and financing have been made;

Confident that an international year of participation offers a unique opportunity for mobilizing efforts, particularly at the local and national levels, to highlight the importance of participation of all stakeholders, promote a better understanding of its benefits and challenges, and strengthen the capacity of national institutions to formulate, implement and monitor policies and improve current practices for engaging the public and stakeholders;

Understanding that “participation” refers broadly to the contributions of citizens to enhancing various aspects of civic life and their engagement in strengthening the quality of governance at all levels.

Understanding also that both rights-holders and duty-bearers have important roles in ensuring meaningful participation, and that participation is facilitated by a broad range of enabling conditions, including access to reliable information.

Aware that for such an international year to be successful and for its impact and practical efficiency to be maximized, adequate preparation and the widespread support of all Governments, specialized agencies, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and the public are required;

Stressing the significant role that non-governmental organizations may play in the preparation and implementation of a programme of activities for a Year

Affirming that the major activities for the observance of an international year should be concentrated at the local and national levels and assisted by the United Nations and its system of organizations, with a view to creating among Governments, policy-makers and the public a greater awareness of ensuring participation in decisions that impact the lives of all rights holders, and the function of participation as essential to improve economic, social and environmental outcomes.

Decides to designate 2022 as the International Year of Participation;

Urges Member States to devote the International Day, as appropriate in the national context, to reaffirming their commitment to action to engage the public and stakeholders, in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. with particular attention to raising awareness of the importance of meaningful public participation and stakeholder engagement, civic education on the rights and responsibilities of public participation and taking measures towards strengthening public administrations in this regard and exploring innovative and effective means of developing effective partnerships with and among stakeholders;

Invites the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs within its responsibilities and functions and in collaboration with Member States, the international community, major groups and other stakeholders and the general public, to facilitate the observance of the International Year of Participation, and invites the Secretary-General to keep the General Assembly informed, as necessary, of the progress made in the implementation of the present resolution;

Stresses that the cost of all activities that may arise from the implementation of the present resolution should be met from voluntary contributions;

Requests the Secretary-General to bring the present resolution to the attention of all Member States, the organizations of the United Nations system and other relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to ensure the observance of the International Year of Participation.