Uganda has demonstrated a strong commitment to sustainable development through continued participation in international and regional processes including the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Commission for Sustainable Development, Rio Conventions, and the New Partnership for Africa’s Development. The shaping of the current global development agenda coincided with the development of the second National Development Plan. This therefore presented an opportunity for the country to incorporate the agenda in the planning framework.

An assessment by the United Nations indicates that Uganda has aligned the NDPII with the agenda 2-30 at an alignment rate of 76% with complete integration of goals 1, 7, 8 and 9. This implies that the SDGs are consistent with the existing national development frameworks. The legal, policy and institutional frameworks in place also support sustainable development.

However, the challenge lies in effective implementation of the legal and policy processes. The successful implementation of the SDGs will depend on the functionality and capacities of implementing institutions and coordinating institutions at the national level. Owing to the multi-dimensional nature of sustainable development, building strong coalitions and partnerships with private sector, civil society, and academia remains critical in the implementation of the SDGs.

Governance and leadership at all levels is important to galvanize support for the SDGs. While the SDGs have been fully owned by leadership at the national level, local governments need to be empowered to champion priority setting and allowed flexibility in mobilizing resources for financing their development priorities. This will ultimately enhance local ownership of the development processes. In addition, Uganda will need to build strategic partnerships for financing and explore a mix of non-traditional financing options.

Government of Uganda is yet to undertake a process to generate a national SDG priority list. The immediate priorities for the SDGs should focus on the following critical goals; poverty, hunger, health, education and inequality. However some goals will be difficult to achieve such as eradication of poverty- Whereas the incidence and intensity of poverty have declined, there are increasing levels of inequality and persistence of vulnerability. Achieving inclusive education is going to be a daunting task as nearly 70% of children that join primary one do not complete primary education. In addition literacy and numeracy levels remain low.
The Government of Uganda has put in place a coordination framework for the SDGs that comprises; SDG Policy Coordination Committee, SDG Implementation Steering Committee, SDG National Taskforce and Technical Working Groups on Monitoring and Evaluation, Planning, Data, Financing and Communication and Advocacy. However, there is growing skepticism about the practicability of its implementation and involvement of local government. The roll out process for the SDG implementation will require a systematic and coordinated approach among the various partners in Uganda.

For successful implementation of the SDGs, CSOs will also have to play an important role in awareness building, monitoring and domestication. Currently, the Uganda National NGO Forum hosts the 2030 Agenda CSO Core Reference Group that will work collaboratively to develop a CSO coordination mechanism for roll out of the SDG process locally. It will also remain a critical platform to harmonize and amplify CSO voices in national, regional and global spaces on sustainable development issues in Uganda.

Uganda continues to remain a country of stark contrasts between those who enjoy the highest standard of living, and those who struggle to make ends meet. Uganda needs to change course. The SDGs provide the basis for this change- as we continually strive to become free from poverty and deprivation, extraordinary effort is needed of all of us, to work towards building a more equitable society where everyone is care for and NO ONE IS LEFT BEHIND.