

GUIDEBOOK FOR THE PREPARATION AND REPORTING OF

VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REVIEWS (VNRs) OF THE SDGs



GLOBAL MARCH

Against Child Labour
Contra el Trabajo Infantil
Contre le Travail des Enfants

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Purpose of the Guidebook

This is a guidebook for country preparation and presentation of Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs), in particular for the country partners of Global March Against Child Labour (Global March). This document draws its literature from the handbook supplements of the UN Secretary-General's guidelines that provides basic and practical information on the steps that countries may take when preparing VNRs and is designed to provide elementary building blocks for a country in the preparation of its reviews.

The guidebook provides practical information on the steps that countries may take when preparing a VNR and explains in a practical way the different elements and stages in the VNR preparation - from communicating the intention to present, to related preparatory workshops, to stress upon the need of working and reporting on SDGs related to the rights of the children, particularly on the issue of child labour. Through this guidebook, Global March aims to assist the countries in their journey to achieving the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular the ones concerning the rights and issues of the exploitation of children. **Chapter 3** of the document highlights the status of children's issues such as child labour in the VNRs submitted so far which paints a grim picture with regard to reporting progress/efforts on child labour eradication/achieving 8.7.

This document will also be updated to reflect new information, important dates and other events related to country reporting of VNRs and will be further refined and updated as more experience and knowledge is acquired along with the deepening of the VNR process.

Global March Against Child Labour

2018

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Chapter 1

Introduction

In the year 2015, member states of the United Nations adopted the new 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda (also known as 2030 Agenda)¹ which is known by its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets designed to end poverty, protect the planet, achieve gender equality and ensure prosperity for all. More and more countries are putting this agenda at the heart of their own national development plans by adapting the global indicators for the SDGs to their own national context. In order to accelerate this progress of the 2030 Agenda, regular international review of SDGs has been encouraged in the form of Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs). The 2030 Agenda encourages member states to *“conduct regular and inclusive reviews of progress of the SDGs at the national and sub-national levels, which are country-led and country-driven”* (paragraph 79 of the 2030 Agenda). These reviews are expected to serve as a basis for regular reviews by the High-level Political Forum (HLPF)² meeting under the auspices of United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

Among the key elements of reviewing the progress of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda is the recognition that every country should own the processes of achieving sustainable development at a sub-national/ national-level by mainstreaming the global SDG targets and indicators in their National Development Agenda. This would also be the foundation for reviews at the regional and global levels, entailing participation and engagement of all sectors of society to develop a comprehensive and thorough process, and to design country specific indicators that are based on human rights. Besides, this will also ensure that people – particularly the most vulnerable and marginalised groups – are at the centre of any initiative and effort for the implementation of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

¹ Transforming our world: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, UN Doc. A/RES/70/1

² The HLPF is the main United Nations platform on sustainable development and it has a central role in the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the global level.



Figure 1 – A snapshot of VNR countries⁵

To date, 111 countries (with few reporting more than once) have voluntarily reported on their implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals at the High-Level Political Forum. The first HLPF³ after the adoption of the 2030 Agenda was held in New York from 11- 20 July 2016 under the theme “Ensuring that no one is left behind” and the 2017 meeting of the HLPF on Sustainable Development took place from 10 to 19 July. This year’s (2018) meeting took place from 9 to 18 July under the theme “Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies”.

Among the more than 50 countries⁴ planning to present VNRs at HLPF 2019 where partners of Global March Against Child Labour (Global March) are present include Algeria, Brazil, Chile, Cote d'Ivoire, Colombia, El Salvador, Ghana, Indonesia, Pakistan, and Philippines. This provides an opportunity to civil society/Global March partners working on ending child labour to engage in the national processes/consultations of VNR 2019 preparation and submission, to include progress and gaps on achievement of SDG target 8.7 on child labour.

3. The establishment of the United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) was mandated in 2012 by the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), "The Future We Want". The format and organisational aspects of the Forum are outlined in General Assembly resolution 67/290. The Forum meets annually under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council for eight days, including a three-day ministerial segment and every four years at the level of Heads of State and Government under the auspices of the General Assembly for two days. The Forum's first meeting was held on 24 September 2013. It replaced the Commission on Sustainable Development, which had met annually since 1993. The HLPF is the main United Nations platform on sustainable development and it has a central role in the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the global level. General Assembly resolution 70/299 provides further guidance on the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.

4 Select Countries listed keeping in mind where partners of Global March Against Child Labour are present and/or where Girls Advocacy Alliance (GAA) is operating/running which have indicated their interest to submit VNR, as per VNR/HLPF website, accessed on 8th October 2018.

5. Handbook for country preparation and presentation of voluntary national reviews- High-level Political Forum on sustainable development.

Chapter 2

What is a VNR?

VNR process is a critical part of accountability architecture for SDGs. VNRs are meant to cover the status of the 17 SDGs in each reporting country and to provide an overview of processes planned to assess national progress towards them. VNRs are supposed to give an up-to-date overview of the implementation process, and provide some baseline facts and information about the status of the SDGs in each reporting country. In the 3 HLPF meetings held so far in 2016, 2017, and 2018; 22, 44 and 46 countries respectively presented their VNRs. Now in 2019, more than 50 countries will be presenting their VNRs (however, some important states, including Australia, Canada, Russia, and the US, have not yet announced any plans for reporting on their VNRs).

VNR process has seven building blocks that roughly correspond to the ways that SDG reviews strengthen the implementation of the SDGs⁶:

1. Promote review of existing institutional frameworks, their restructuring in light of the 2030 Agenda, integrating SDG implementation in national plans and strategies and support their implementation;
2. Strengthen cooperation and collaboration among government agencies and ministries and between donors;
3. Facilitate comparability across and within countries as part of an official review process;
4. Facilitate the exchange of experiences and good practice between countries;
5. Provide opportunities for capacity building and learning;
6. Provide for strengthening the national statistics system and support data collection for the SDG Agenda; and
7. Provide space for inclusive national policy dialogue and strengthening of stakeholder participation in institutions.

Even though each year, the HLPF has a theme which countries are invited to reflect upon in their VNR (for instance for 2019, the theme is that of “Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality” with a focus on SDG 4, 8, 10, 13, 16 and 17) but the voluntary guidelines, as well as civil society groups, recommend the inclusion of a review of all SDGs in the VNR.

⁶ http://www.campaignforeducation.org/docs/reports/GCE_TTD_VNR_GAWE2017_EN_WEB.pdf

2.2 Are SDGRs and VNRs the same?

The VNR and SDGR (Sustainable Development Goals Reporting) are complementary as both have the objective to analyse country-level experiences, successes, challenges and lessons-learned on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Agenda 2030. Both the VNR and SDGR are built on multi-stakeholder engagement and rely on the input of quality data. The VNR is part of the formal intergovernmental follow-up and review process on the Agenda 2030 and is presented at the UN High Level Political Forum (HLPF). It represents a country's progress report to its peers and other stakeholders at the global level on the implementation of the Agenda 2030. Its preparation process needs to follow a time-line that enables the country to present to the HLPF taking place in July of each year in New York. This time-line includes not only a preparatory process within the country but also peer engagement at the regional and global levels. The VNR is guided by the UN Secretary-General's Voluntary Guidelines which were recognized by the UN General Assembly in 2016. The guidelines are voluntary and countries can apply them as fits their context. The use of the guidelines is recommended, however, to promote consistency and comparability between VNRs and from one year to the next.

The process for a SDGR is more flexible, and there are no formal requirements for the structure, frequency and timeline. The SDGR is meant primarily for use by the country to guide its own implementation and monitoring of SDGs and can build on the experience with national reporting during the MDG era. It is also better placed to include a more in depth review of policies and programmes and recommendations for follow-up at national level. An SDGR could also include analysis at sub-national or city level, as was done in some countries during the MDG implementation period. Both VNR and SDGRs are therefore very similar preparatory activities such as multi-stakeholder dialogues and workshops to take stock of progress towards SDG implementation, focusing on analyzing data and data gaps, highlighting challenges and trends. Coordination of inputs and timelines is important to ensure that activities carried out for one process reinforce and support the other.

Chapter 3

Key aspects for the preparation of the content of VNRs

Before one gets into the depth of the processes of the VNR writing, it is essential to be aware of some key aspects that are heavily integrated with the content of the VNRs, i.e. the VNRs must report the progress and follow up with these aspects in perspective.

3.1 Interlinkages between the goals/policy coherence

One of the characteristics that make the Agenda 2030 different from the MDGs is its indivisibility. The SDGs are all interlinked and should be approached as such. To apply this indivisibility, implementation of the agenda and the SDGs should not be undertaken in isolation but have an integrated and coordinated approach in policy making, programming and budgeting. It requires looking at optimising synergies and minimising trade-offs.

As an example, **Malaysia's** VNR⁷ explicitly states the government's recognition of the multi-dimensionality of development and how it is working on multiple facets at once and not only on economic growth. Malaysia also commissioned a study on policy coherence, governance, human capital and data responses for the SDGs. In the VNR it links each of the goals reviewed to the main "thrusters" of its 11th National Development Plan, showing the interlinkages between the three dimensions of sustainable development. Similarly, **Indonesia** in its VNR⁸ addressed the interlinkages of several goals and their impact on poverty reduction. The importance of cross-sectoral approaches is also reflected in different parts of the report, with a focus on SDG 3 on health.

3.2 Integration for sustainable development and the policy cycle

The 2030 underlines a global commitment to "achieving sustainable development in its three dimensions—**economic, social and environmental**—in a balanced and integrated manner". Although there is global commitment to this integrated agenda for development, the "how" of integration has not been well defined nor communicated. The work of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the

About a third of the Main Messages from VNR 2017 countries, provide a balanced view of implementation related to all three pillars of sustainable development

⁷ Information based on VNR of Malaysia acknowledging that there might be other views from stakeholders

⁸ Information based on VNR of Indonesia acknowledging that there might be other views from stakeholders

Pacific (ESCAP)⁹ emphasises the need for four normative shifts in policy to promote integration:

- The basic conditions of social justice and ecological sustainability must become fundamental policy objectives rather than marginal objectives;
- There must be a shift from a predominantly short-term policy horizon to one that seeks long-term benefits for all;
- A focus on gross domestic product (GDP) as a measure of progress should be replaced by metrics that encompass the three dimensions of sustainable development; and
- Public policy must recognise that the resources of the planet are not limitless and that resource constraints cannot always be addressed by technology

3.3 Leaving no one behind

Ensuring that no one is left behind is at the heart of the 2030 Agenda. Special attention needs to be given to those who are being left behind, and to reach the furthest first. To apply this principle, many countries first need an honest assessment of who is being left behind, where and how¹⁰. Such an assessment should also look at policies, programmes and budgets to see where changes are needed. Overall, the 2030 Agenda stipulates that respect for human rights and a particular focus on the poorest, most vulnerable, and those furthest behind should guide the follow up and review at all levels.

Malaysia in its VNR describes programmes for the bottom 40, the collection of disaggregated data and working with CSOs and NGOs to reach people at local level. It does not, however, specify who might be left behind and how it would go about reaching the further behind first. Likewise, **Indonesia's** report admits the challenge of ensuring that no one is left behind in the context of its archipelagic nature and cultural, ethnic and religious diversity. It also indicates that the discussions for the indicators reflected data, disaggregated by socio-economic status, gender, age group, domicile, as well as administrative level to address the principle of leaving no one behind. **Thailand** in its report mentions several specific vulnerable and marginalised groups, as for example under SDG 4 on education where it talks about equal access to education for underprivileged children, children with disabilities, children of ethnic groups and children in marginalised groups.

⁹ Integrating the three dimensions of sustainable development: ESCAP 2017

¹⁰ Ensuring that no one is left behind: Envisioning an inclusive world in 2030: Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform

3.3 Women and girls

According to the Synthesis of Voluntary National Reviews 2017, SDG 5 that underlines gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls as a prerequisite is key to achieving the 2030 Agenda. Even though many countries reported on the legal framework as well as institutional mechanisms and policies in place to end all forms of discrimination and ensure the rights of women and girls, they also need to emphasise the importance of gender mainstreaming and taking measures to integrate gender perspective into policy-making, including gender-responsive budgeting for issues such as violence against women and girls, trafficking, child labour, forced labour and other forms of commercial and sexual exploitation.

India's VNR 2017 –

The 2017 VNR by India (<http://niti.gov.in/content/voluntary-national-review-report>) can be seen as an example as it traces the trajectory of the progress by focusing on SDGs and their indicators on women and girls. Not only does the VNR encapsulate the laws and policies' concerning women and girls but also gives a segregated data on various issues regarding gender inequality and discrimination such as gender wage gap, maternal health, dowry and child marriage amongst others but also some recommendations to look into possible interventions.

According to the 2017 HLPF Thematic review of SDG 5¹¹ some progress has been made in recent years to end discrimination against women and girls in laws, policies and practices, but currently there is no comprehensive overview of data on legal frameworks in place to promote, enforce and monitor equality and non-discrimination on the basis of sex. On a positive side, many countries have reported on specific challenges faced by women and girls and some noted measures to reach the most disadvantaged or marginalised (Nigeria and Portugal) women and girls. In Portugal, the National Strategy for the Integration of Roma Communities recognises the particular vulnerability of Roma women and girls to multiple discriminations. Nigeria referenced the initiative Educating Nigerian Girls in Nigerian Enterprise

(ENGINE), a vocational training programme that aims to empower educationally and economically disadvantaged girls in five local government areas of Lagos. The upcoming VNRs therefore must take into consideration these gaps and aim to contextualise the indicators according to their own regions.

¹¹ This background note has been developed by members of ECESA Plus as a coordinated contribution by the UN system to the 2017 HLPF in depth review of SDG 5. Co-leads UN-Women, UNFPA and UNESCO with contributions from OHCHR, UNCDF, UNAIDS, UNIDO, ESCAP, ECA, ESCWA, ECLAC, UNECE, RCNYO, IFAD, IOM, World Bank Group, ITU, UNICEF, UN-OCHA, ILO, WHO and UN-DESA.

3.4 Children

Children are affected by all the sustainable development goals, whether poverty, hunger, inequality or climate change. Though the goals focus on sustainable development, they are inextricably linked to human rights generally and the rights of children specifically. As UNICEF has noted, the rights enshrined by the Convention on the Rights of the Child, run through the Sustainable Development Goals and so the realisation of these goals must take into account the corresponding rights of children. The new goals are not revolutionary or a radical reinvention of rights and development standards, they set targets for development and the realisation of rights that already exist.

One of the most crucial areas of attention for 2030 Agenda for partners of Global March are child rights-related SDGs, in particular those to end child labour, trafficking, and ensuring education of all (SDG 8.7, 16.2 and 4). In general, the rights of children have been emphasised in VNRs of many countries and children as a vulnerable group has been identified in many reports. Some countries such as Bangladesh, Guatemala, Indonesia, Nepal, and Zimbabwe have specifically stressed the importance of ending child marriage in their VNRs. Countries also shared various policies and tools to ensure children's access to quality healthcare. In Kenya, mobile clinics have brought healthcare services to mothers and children who would otherwise have to walk miles to seek treatment. Many countries also highlighted challenges such as malnutrition and stunting, which could be life-threatening to children in poverty. However, out of the themes/child rights issues that Global March and its partners work on – child labour, trafficking and education, only the “education” theme (and countries' efforts towards SDG 4) are covered in the VNRs of many countries. See the box below as an example.

Inclusion of Children in VNRs and SDG 4

Many countries reported progress on SDG 4 in their VNRs in 2017. Examples vary from secondary school attendance being on the increase (Zimbabwe), improvements in access to girl-child training (Nigeria), increasing the number of higher education institutions (Jordan), a decrease in drop-out rate (Luxembourg), an upward trend of school age children enrolling in 12-year basic education (Thailand), and an increase in the number of children attending early learning centres (Kenya). El Salvador, Jordan, Thailand and Zimbabwe, indicated that education was a priority area for the government. Countries also reported on the development of national education plans or policies, setting priorities for the education sector and aligning them with SDG 4 (Honduras, Maldives, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Maldives, Portugal, Thailand and Qatar). Several countries also reported on challenges in the implementation of SDG 4, ranging from financing of public education (Kenya, and Zimbabwe), increasing the number of qualified teachers (Sweden), preventing drop-outs (Benin, Kenya and Tajikistan), the lack of sufficient numbers of early childhood education and development services (Jordan), the inclusion of specific vulnerable groups given the high educational inequality related to socio-economic and migration status (Belgium), and how to raise education standards and create a culture that is conducive to learning (Thailand).

Regarding the issue of child labour and trafficking (SDG 8.7 and 16.2), based on the review of Synthesis of Voluntary National Reviews for 2016¹² and 2017¹³ (which examines the efforts of reporting countries to implement the 2030 Agenda, including challenges, gaps, achievements and lessons learned), there was no mention of child labour, while human trafficking was reported as a challenge (by Sweden and Thailand). An analysis of VNR reports submitted so far of select countries where Global March partners are operating also paints a grim picture with regard to reporting progress/efforts on child labour eradication/achieving 8.7. See table 1 below:

Country	Year in which VNR was submitted	Coverage on child labour progress/Target 8.7
Bangladesh	2017	Child labour/Target 8.7 not covered or included
Benin	2017	Child labour/Target 8.7 not covered or included
Benin	2018	Child labour/Target 8.7 not covered or included
Brazil	2017	Child labour covered briefly under SDG 1 (on poverty)
India	2017	Child labour/Target 8.7 not covered or included
Indonesia	2017	Child labour/Target 8.7 not covered or included
Kenya	2017	Child labour mentioned under overall SDG 8
Nepal	2017	Child labour/Target 8.7 not covered or included
Philippines	2016	Child labour/Target 8.7 not covered or included. Child protection however mentioned
Togo	2017	Child labour/Target 8.7 not covered or included
Togo	2018	Child labour/Target 8.7 not covered or included
Uganda	2016	Child labour included in the category of vulnerable children that needs attention and SDG 8.7 also mapped to 2 nd National Development Plan indicators. But efforts/progress made on child labour elimination not covered.

Table 1 – Reporting on Target 8.7 in VNRs

¹²https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/127761701030E_2016_VNR_Synthesis_Report_ver3.pdf

¹³ https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/17109Synthesis_Report_VNRs_2017.pdf

Based on the above, it can be said that inclusion of efforts, steps, achievements on child labour, trafficking and education in VNRs with the aim that countries prioritise eradication of child labour and take steps to achieve SDG 8.7 is a key advocacy and lobby action that anti-child labour organisations, civil society and Global March partners need to undertake, which to begin with requires their inclusion and participation in the VNR process in their countries.

Chapter 4

How to begin?

4.1 Communicating the intention to conduct a VNR

Given that the President of ECOSOC convenes the HLPF, the practice is for countries to notify the office of the President of the intention to conduct a VNR. There is therefore no registration form or template. Once a country has decided to carry out a review, the decision is communicated to the President by means of a letter from the Permanent Representative of the country to the UN (New York). For a sample, see the attached letter (Figure 3). The President then notifies countries related to the VNRs by means of a letter to their Permanent Missions in New York. The list of VNR countries is established on a first come, first served basis, until the maximum number is reached. In September 2017, the President informed countries that the list of VNRs for 2018 had been closed, with the total set at 47. Those that did not make it onto the list for 2018 were encouraged to come forward for the 2019 HLPF. Countries have already begun stepping forward to register their interest for 2019. A list of volunteering countries for all years is available on the HLPF website at this link: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/vnrs/>

H.E. [Name of Ambassador],
President of the Economic and Social Council,
United Nations

Excellency,

I refer to the [year] high-level political forum on sustainable development (HLPF), to be convened under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in July [year].

With reference to General Assembly resolution 70/1, I have the honour to request that [Name of country] be inscribed on the list of countries participating in the voluntary national reviews (VNRs) to take place at the [year] HLPF.

[Name of country] attaches great importance to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and looks forward to sharing experiences, including successes, challenges and lessons learned.

I look forward to early acknowledgement of receipt of this letter.

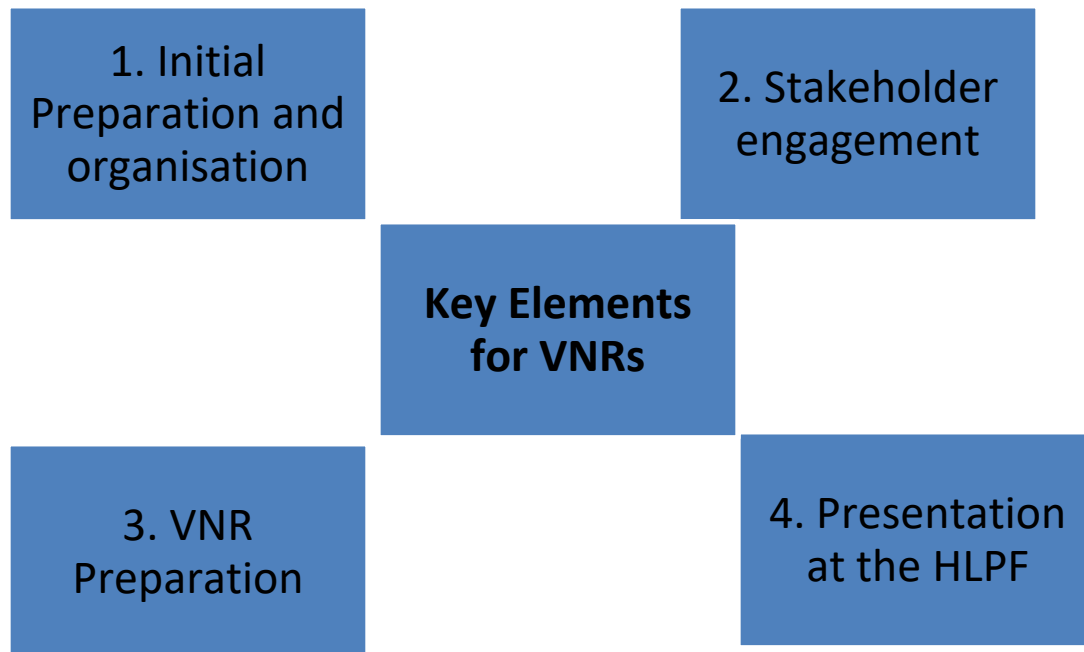
Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

(Signed)

Figure 2: Sample text of letter communicating decision to conduct a VNR¹⁴

¹⁴ Handbook for the preparation of Voluntary National Reviews, DESA/DSD, January 2018, Page 9

4.2 Key elements for organising and structuring the VNRs



4.2.1 Initial preparation and organisation

Coordination structure – An entity within the government needs to be responsible for the overall coordination of the VNR. This could be an existing body/institution or an ad hoc arrangement, e.g. lead department/ agency, or an integrated, inter-ministerial group, coordinating office or committee. A small advisory group could be considered to lead the process of writing of the VNR. Contact and collaboration with other relevant government ministries, agencies and relevant stakeholders in order to provide information and data, including the establishment of focal points if necessary, should be considered.

Resources - Determine estimated costs of carrying out and writing the review, as well as identify possible sources of funding, as required. Extra costs may arise for organisation of stakeholder meetings, travel of officials, production of the review (editing, layout, translation), and preparation of audio-visual material, including videos, for the VNR presentation at the HLPF. Human and technical resources will need to be dedicated to the VNR preparation.

Scope of the VNR - Define the scope of the review of the 2030 Agenda, including determining whether all the SDGs are to be included in the VNR. The UN Secretary General's guidelines encourage countries to report on the progress in relation to all 17 SDGs. Where priority targets have been identified by the HLPF, countries could cover those in greater depth. Consider where the country is in the national planning cycle and whether the national strategy or plan has been updated or aligned with the SDGs.

Draft outline and information gathering - Draft a preliminary outline and decide on length, including the maximum length, and structure of the review, in line with the overall time-frame for preparation of the VNR. The experience from countries that have already prepared a review is that it is helpful to set a page limit at the beginning of the process. To gather inputs, prepare a list of bodies and agencies that will be providing data and information for the VNR. The national statistical office (NSO) and the relevant line ministries are of special importance, but there may also be other contributors, e.g. academia and think tanks.

Develop a stakeholder engagement plan - Identify key stakeholders, methods of engagement and consider online and other options. All sectors and levels of government, civil society, private sector, members of parliament and national human rights institutions, should be considered.

Data - Access to high quality, up-to-date, and disaggregated data is vital for the VNR. Contacts with the national statistical office and other providers of data should be part of the planning process. Data will be needed to describe trends in relation to the goals covered in the review. If a statistical annex is included in the review, more extensive statistics on progress can be included there. A second step is to involve the National Statistical System for the collection of data across ministries and beyond. A data availability assessment, the establishment of national SDG indicators and benchmarks and a data ecosystem¹⁵ assessment are all elements that would provide the building blocks for the data inputs for the VNR. As an example, the 2016 VNR of the **Philippines** was based on the results of a series of technical workshops on the assessment and identification of SDG

¹⁵ "Data ecosystems" approach is an inclusive and innovative method to strengthen data availability and usage for the Agenda 2030. Using such an approach means looking at all possible types of data, actors, legal frameworks, institutions, technologies, and interaction between them - going well beyond solely governmental bodies. Piloted in 6 countries key findings point at the need for opening up national statistical systems to non-official stakeholders and innovative data approaches, providing incentives for government institutions to share untapped existing administrative data, paying attention to infrastructure requirements such as ICT, and coordinating donors' assistance on data and statistics, and strengthen collaborative partnerships.

Indicators with broad participation of stakeholders from government, NGOs, civil society, academia, private sector, and the UN. These workshops also discussed strategies in incorporating SDGs in the planning process such as the matching of the SDG goals with the Long-Term Vision. Another example is of Indonesia, which undertook a specific study on the implementation and monitoring of SDG 16 exploring alternative sources of data. Data used in the VNR preparation were from 2006 to 2016 collected from BPS-Statistics Indonesia, Ministries/Institutions (K/L) and other data sources from research institutes, CSOs and universities. Malaysia is planning to work with civil society and other stakeholders in data sharing, specifically to monitoring SDG progress at the local level.

The use of data from sources outside of the traditional statistical system could also fill gaps and provide important information for the implementation of the Agenda 2030. An example of alternative data that was used widely is the My World Survey. Through this Survey over 10 million people expressed their priorities for the future which fed into the intergovernmental process on the design of the SDGs and influenced the final shape of the Agenda. At national and local level, there are experiences to build on from citizen generated data, the use of big data and perception surveys to name a few.

Draw on existing reports - Use existing national platforms and processes that could contribute to the VNR writing and analysis process. Examples include:

- national frameworks such as national development plans and national sustainable development strategies;
- reports submitted to international bodies, including those under international human rights treaties, and other reports such as the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) relating to the Paris Agreement;
- The SDG reports prepared at the national level together with the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) if available.

Allocate time - Establish a process and a timeline for technical editing as well as for a high-level review of the VNR and its Main Messages. This should allow for the integration of comments from within government and other stakeholders. Consider putting in place mechanisms to deal with potentially contentious issues.

4.2.2 Engaging the Stakeholders

One of the founding principles of the 2030 Agenda is the requirement for processes to be participatory and inclusive. In practice, this means ensuring that all stakeholders, including all levels and sectors of government, civil society, the private sector, members of parliament, and national human rights institutions, are involved in the review and implementation processes. The participation of stakeholders promotes sustainable decisions, by giving groups affected by those decisions the opportunity to communicate their needs and interests. Participation and consultation also builds ownership of the 2030 Agenda, and therefore contributes to a whole-of-society approach to the implementation of the SDGs.

Stakeholder groups have highlighted that they should be actively engaged throughout the process of design, implementation, monitoring and review of the 2030 Agenda. A stakeholder engagement plan can be used, among other things, to frame the strategic purpose for consultation; the stakeholders to be consulted; means; techniques and methods for consultation (face-to-face workshops, online platforms, focus groups, written comments); and how the consultation process will be documented. Efforts could include reaching out to legislative bodies, the public, civil society and the private sector (see Figure 4). Awareness raising efforts can encompass a range of activities such as simplifying and translating the SDGs into local languages and including the SDGs in school and university teaching programmes. It is however, equally important for stakeholders engagement to have awareness about VNRs, especially when it comes to engaging in the VNR process. Various stakeholder groups have made recommendations for engagement, such as:

- Set-up a stakeholder steering committee as the first step in preparing and inclusive country-led report. This committee should include representatives from all stakeholder groups, including parliaments and national human rights institutions.
- Raise awareness on the 2030 Agenda and the VNR/SDGR process and make specific efforts to reach out to local level and grassroots organisations.
- Outsource any background research to local researchers instead of international ones and utilise multi-stakeholder review of research.
- Organise multi-stakeholder consultations for inputs to feedback on draft reports and validate findings.
- Encourage and support coalition building among civil society organisations and stakeholder groups.

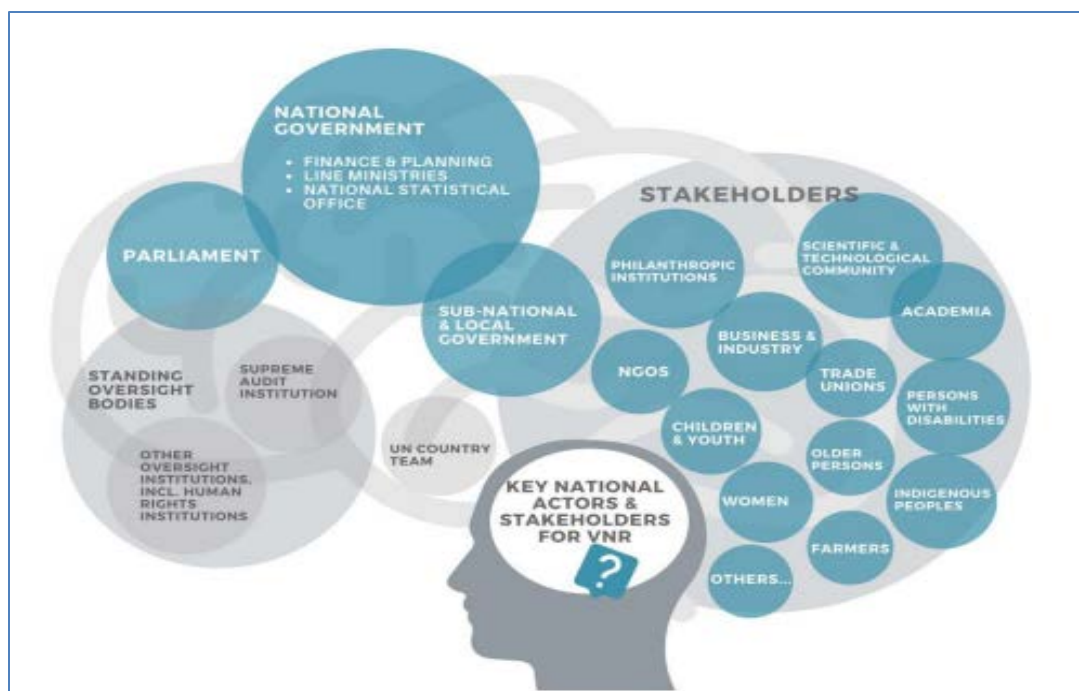


Figure 3: Indicative map of key national actors and stakeholders (Source - DESA/DSD)

While every effort should be made to engage stakeholders, civil society in particular plays a key role in ensuring accountability. At the national level, several civil society coalitions have prepared shadow reports for the 2016 and 2017 HLPF. Examples from VNR 2017 include shadow reports from India and Nepal. Some of these shadow reports have been critical of the mechanisms for civil society engagement and the limiting of civil society space. Several have noted a gap between words and action from government at national level. Notably, the civil society report from Kepa in Finland defined the collaboration between government and civil society as exemplary in the context of the drafting of the action plan for sustainable development. The achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals will not be possible without their full ownership at local level and by civil society. With this conviction, city, local and regional government networks are developing global, regional and national systems of 'localisation' to contribute to awareness raising, alignment of work plans, learning exchange and local monitoring and reporting.

4.2.3 Preparing the review

The following headings are generally presented according to the sections of the Secretary-General's guidelines. A number of the steps described below may take place simultaneously and continuously. The guidelines make clear that each country will decide on the scope of their review and the format in which they wish to present their findings. However, countries may voluntarily use the components which are presented in the guidelines to help them frame the preparations for their VNRs.

The review is expected to show what steps the country has taken to implement the 2030 Agenda, including the goals and targets, and provide an assessment of the results on the ground. Implementation needs to be more visible over time and the country should indicate exactly what concrete, tangible steps it has taken to ensure that the 2030 Agenda is being achieved.

Opening statement, Highlights, Introduction, Methodology for the process of preparation of the review

Countries are invited to give an overview of their own context and overall national objectives. Countries may provide a snapshot of the voluntary national review, including the preparation process and involvement of multi-stakeholders, and areas where they would need support, including in terms of finance, capacity building, technology, and partnerships. The introduction could also provide links to other international agreements such as the Addis Ababa Action Agenda¹⁶, the Paris Agreement¹⁷, and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction¹⁸. Countries could provide information on the process for preparation of the national review, for example, how different levels and sectors of government and other multi-stakeholders contributed to the review.

Ownership of the SDGs

Tied in directly with the section on multi-stakeholder participation described above, is the national ownership of the SDGs which relies majorly on awareness raising and dissemination of information about the SDGs throughout all branches and levels of government and among stakeholders. It is also a crucial and ongoing dimension of creating an enabling environment, and participatory and inclusive processes, a central requirement in the 2030 Agenda for creating a sense of ownership. Keeping the goals and targets under constant national review and ensuring the sustained involvement of all stakeholders, including through monitoring and review mechanisms, is important to maintain ownership of the SDGs. Some factors that can be considered to enable inclusive partnership for ownership of SDGs include the following:

- A. Exploring mechanisms and platforms already available for stakeholders from civil society and the private sector to contribute to the VNR and implementation of the SDGs

¹⁶ http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/AAAA_Outcome.pdf

¹⁷ https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/english_paris_agreement.pdf

¹⁸ https://www.unisdr.org/files/44983_sendaiframeworksimplicatedchart.pdf

- B. Identifying the most relevant stakeholders and umbrella bodies that can be consulted or to create targeted consultation processes, particularly to cover gaps in situations where no multi-stakeholder bodies exist
- C. Focusing on the outreach target groups, especially the most marginalised and vulnerable population and mainstreaming (bring into the mainstream) their issues, for instance child labour, where the nuances of the issue - gender, ethnicity, socio-economic indicators and cultural norms can be mainstreamed into policies and national development plans of countries
- D. Outlining how all sectors and levels of government (local and subnational) can be engaged in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and to what extent can the SDGs be integrated into the policies and programmes of respective ministries
- E. Encouraging the Parliament to be involved in the preparation of the VNR and the implementation of the SDGs

Example

In [Kenya](#), the Ministry of Devolution and Planning is mandated to coordinate the implementation and monitoring of the SDGs. The SDGs Coordinating Department has been established within the Ministry, supported by an Inter-Agency Technical Committee (IATC), comprising of officers from key government ministries, civil society organisations and the private sector. For ownership and ease of follow-up the umbrella bodies are the leads for stakeholders such as the private sector, CSOs, sub-national governments, youth and persons with disabilities. Some examples are - Kenya Private Sector Alliance (KEPSA), SDGs Kenya Forum, the Council of Governors (CoG), National Youth Council and the Association of Persons Living with Disabilities.

From: The VNR of Kenya, 2017

Incorporation of the SDGs into national frameworks

The effective implementation of the SDGs depends on their incorporation into all relevant national frameworks. The VNR needs to analyse how well such frameworks are aligned with the SDGs and determine whether there are critical gaps. Countries should be specific about the main challenges and difficulties they face in implementing the SDGs, and are encouraged to provide an analysis of the causes of these challenges and difficulties. There are various laws and policies that should be examined to assess a country's alignment with the SDGs including:

- national vision documents;
- a national development plan or sustainable development strategy;
- sectoral policies, strategies, plans and programmes;
- legislation; and
- local government and sub-national development plans; as well as laws, policies, strategies, and programmes.

Policy Area/Sector	SDG-1: Poverty								SDG-2: Food security							
	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.a	1.b		2.1	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.5	2.a	2.b	2.c
Health Strategy	X								X							
Water Sector Development Policy	X				X					X	X					
National Biodiversity Strategy				X								X	X	X		
Land Policy Act	X			X							X	X				
National Smallholder Policy	X			X			X		X	X						
Justice System Reform Programme				X			X									
Prevention of Violence Against Women Policy					X											
Early Childhood Development Programme		X							X							
	4	1	0	4	2	0	2	0	3	3	3	1	1	0	0	
Single target addressed in multiple policies								One plan covering multiple targets								

Figure 4 - Mapping of existing policies to the SDGs (DESA/DSD, adapted from the RIA of UNDP)

Simple grid-based tools are a way to begin to explore the alignment between existing national frameworks and the SDGs. Figure 5 above shows a simplified representation from the Rapid Integrated Assessment (RIA) tool¹⁹ of UNDP. Where gaps and convergences are identified, the VNR could propose steps to better incorporate the SDGs into national frameworks. The review could provide an overview of adjustments to existing policies and strategies, or the adoption of new policies and instruments for achieving the SDGs. Some questions that could be considered include the following:

- Has the country conducted a gap analysis of the SDGs and its national frameworks?
- To what extent can the implementation of the SDGs be advanced through existing plans and strategies?
- Do they need to be updated or revised to implement the SDGs?
- How have the SDGs been aligned with national policy frameworks?
- What has been done to integrate the SDGs into legislation, policies, plans and programmes?
- What are the main challenges and difficulties that the country faces in implementing the SDGs?
- What actions have been undertaken by sub-national and local government to implement the SDGs?

¹⁹ RAPID INTEGRATED ASSESSMENT (RIA) To facilitate mainstreaming of SDGs into national and local plans

- What partnerships, including with the private sector, have been put in place for implementation of the SDGs? Consider examples that could be showcased as good practices.

Integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development

An integrated implementation of the 2030 Agenda means that reviews should discuss the inter-linkages that exist between SDGs, both in the form of synergies and also in trade-offs and conflicts. A clear understanding of inter-linkages will, in turn, allow countries to manage them, notably through optimum cooperation and coordination between sectors and institutions. Under this section, the VNR could provide a brief overview of analysis of inter-linkages and institutional arrangements undertaken and designed for integrated policy-making, and examples of policies that integrate the three dimensions (Integration of the economic, social and environmental dimensions). Some factors that could be considered include the following:

- A. Identifying the most important national inter-linkages, or nexus of inter-linkages, between the goals and targets covered in the VNR
- B. Identifying the main barriers to the better integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development and the 17 SDGs
- C. Evaluating how the government maps responsibilities of ministries against each of the SDGs, or even SDG targets
- D. Identifying and evaluating actions that are being taken to ensure that all levels of government work together (horizontally across sectors, and vertically from national to local) to integrate the three dimensions and the SDGs
- E. Identifying the examples and good practices of the positive impact of more integrated national policies
- F.

A simple example can be used to illustrate how certain policies/strategies have multiple benefits. Unconditional cash transfers to young girls in Africa can reduce poverty, keep girls in school, reduce unwanted teen pregnancies and decrease HIV transmission by as much as two thirds. Thus, an intervention motivated by a 'social protection' objective ends up advancing other goals such as the reduction of poverty, education, health and gender equality goals.

A basic template can be used to explore inter-linkages between SDG targets, such as this one below, adapted for illustrative purposes from the RIA tool²⁰

²⁰ The Rapid Integrated Assessment Policy Tool developed by UNDP may help countries gauge their readiness for SDG implementation. This assessment tool provides an initial overview of a country's alignment with the 2030 Agenda through a gap analysis of SDG targets. It can be used as a starting point for more focussed analysis. The RIA Tool is available here <http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/sustainable-development-goals/rapid-integrated-assessment---mainstreaming-sdgs-into-national-a.html>

SDG goals and targets	Main SD dimensions	Potential stakeholders	SDGs potential interlinkages
GOAL 8 8.7 Take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labour in all its forms	Social, Cultural, Economic, Political	Ministry of Labour and Employment, Ministry of Women and Children, UNDP, UNICEF, ILO	Goal 5 Gender 5.1 Goal 10 Inequality 10.4, 10.7
GOAL 5 Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls 5.1 End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere	Social	Ministry of Social Development, Ministry of Women and Children, Ministry of Labour, Human Rights Commission, Ministry of Education	Goal 1 Poverty 1.2, 1.4 Goal 2 Food 2.3 Goal 10 Inequality 10.2, 10.3
5.2 Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation	Social	Ministry of Social Development, Ministry of Justice, Human Rights Commission, Ministry of Education	Goal 3 Health 3.1, 3.7 Goal 16 Peace and Effective Institutions 16.1

Table 2: Identification of potential inter-linkages between SDGs

Such an initial mapping of potential inter-linkages can be used to identify targets where more than one government agency has responsibility, which suggests areas for integrated policy-making and implementation. The initial mapping can also be used for more in-depth analysis of inter-linkages between targets of special interest, e.g. national priorities, by means of focus groups or more specialised modelling tools. This could include examining synergies and possible strategies for tackling trade-offs.

Country examples

In **Finland**, all Ministries are required to chart key policy measures taken in implementing the goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda on the basis that the SDGs are integrated, meaning that the implementation of the individual goals and targets cannot be directly assigned to sectoral Ministries. To ensure the realisation of the mutual links between the goals, all sectoral ministries assess their role with regard to all 169 targets.

From: The VNR of Finland, 2016

In **Norway**, responsibility for each of the 17 SDGs has been attributed to a particular ministry, which coordinates with others involved in the various targets of the goal it coordinates. The Ministry of Finance receives from each of the coordinating Ministries reports on the follow-up of each goal and budget proposals, which the Ministry then consolidates and presents to parliament.

From: The VNR of Norway, 2016

Institutional mechanisms

Implementation of the 2030 Agenda will require countries to examine and often strengthen their institutional tools, ensuring that existing and/or new mechanisms are robust and inclusive. In many countries institutions have been put in place and/or strengthened. Responsibility for coherent implementation and review of the 2030 Agenda is often shared and allocated among various levels of Government (national, subnational and local). The institutional mechanism should remain relevant across political cycles, should overlap with the electoral cycle of the country in question rather than follow it. This ensures that the institution's work extends beyond the term of the present government to which both current and future decision makers and political parties are committed.

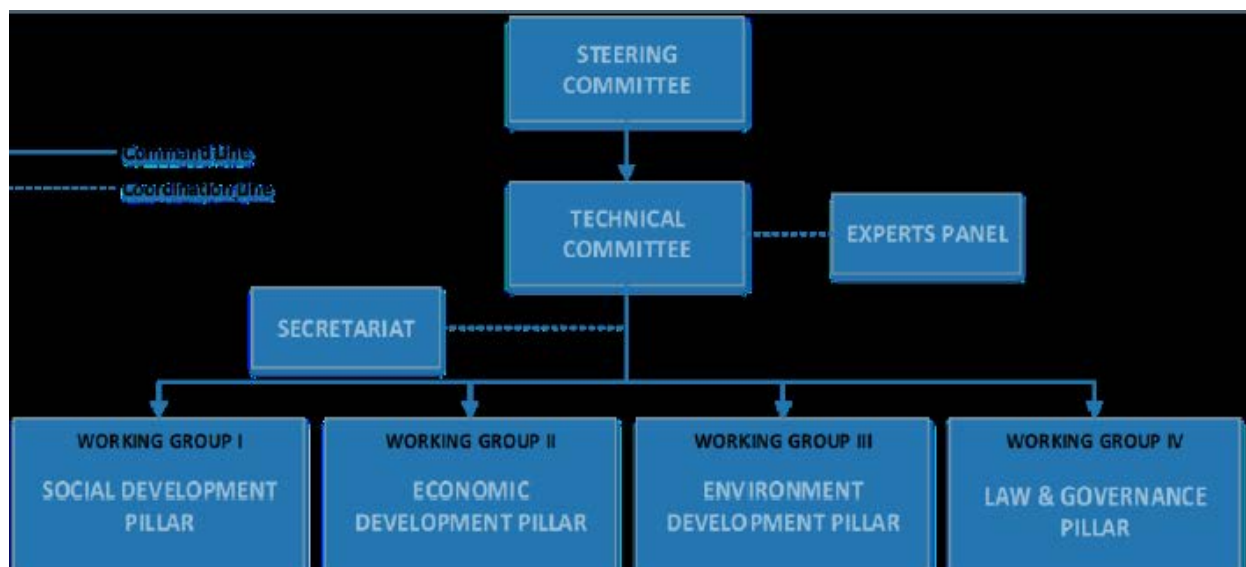


Figure 5 - Examples of institutional coordination mechanisms – VNR 2017 of Indonesia

Some questions that could be considered include the following:

- How does the institutional framework incorporate different actors and stakeholders and their interests? How do the overall institutional arrangements relating to the SDGs involve key line ministries, sub-national and local levels of government, parliament, human rights institutions, civil society organisations, and the private sector.
- What is the involvement of the highest level of government in the institutional arrangement?
- How does the institutional arrangement work to mobilise all stakeholders around the SDGs and promote change?
- Are there examples of how the institutional arrangements have had an impact, for instance through more integrated policy-making?
- How does the country review progress in implementing the SDGs, including possible plans for the conduct of national reviews that take into account the presentation of the VNR at the HLPF?

Goals and targets

Countries are encouraged to provide information on the progress and status of all the SDGs, but may also provide a more in-depth analysis of a few selected SDGs and targets and their related gaps and challenges. These may be chosen by the country in light of its priorities, but could also be provided because countries have best practice examples in implementation to share at the global level. The review of goals could include a qualitative and/ or a quantitative dimension. If countries are doing their second and subsequent voluntary national reviews it would be desirable to include the progress made since the previous review.

Some questions that could be considered include the following:

- Has a baseline for the SDGs been established and used?
- Has the country prioritised certain SDGs? What criteria /process was used to derive priorities?
- How are the various levels of government, parliament, and stakeholders working together to achieve the goals and targets?
- What progress has the country made on the goals and targets? What are the trends? Are there emerging issues of concern? Consider how the VNR can analyse progress/challenges, rather than describing existing/planned policies.
- Where gaps and challenges have been identified, what measures have been put in place, or are planned, to address them?
- What efforts have been made to ensure that all policies, plans and programmes reach the most marginalised and leave no one behind?

- Are there good practice examples of achieving the goals and targets which other countries would find useful?

Means of implementation

The review process needs to consider how means of implementation are mobilised, what difficulties are being encountered, and what additional resources are needed to implement the 2030 Agenda. Costing and budgeting for the SDGS, as well as strengthening institutional and human capacities for implementation should also be considered when preparing the review.

Some questions that could be considered include the following:

- What are current resource flows? Summarise steps taken to mobilise domestic resources, official development assistance and additional sources of funding, such as foreign direct investment and remittances.
- What steps have been taken to identify critical gaps and estimate additional resources that are needed to implement the 2030 Agenda? Relevant aspects include financing, capacity development needs, including for data and statistics knowledge sharing, technology and partnerships.
- How can financial systems and resource allocations be aligned to support the realisation of the 2030 Agenda?
- How is the country engaging in international cooperation? Examples could include South-South, North-South and other forms of cooperation.
- How is the Addis Ababa Agenda being used to mobilise means of implementation?
- What partnerships is the country involved in? Are there opportunities to expand partnerships for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda? What role does/can the private sector play?

Example - In Indonesia reinforcement of domestic resources mobilization is conducted through increasing public-private partnerships in financing strategic projects, developing banking services, increasing tax revenues, exploring alternative contributions from philanthropies, diaspora funds and religious social funds. From: the VNR of the Republic of Indonesia, 2017

Under the means of implementation heading, the Bangladesh review contains a section on finance that summarises the situation with respect to domestic resource mobilization (tax revenue), receipts from official development assistance (ODA), foreign direct investment (FDI), and remittances. From: the VNR of Bangladesh, 2017

COUNTRY	REVIEW
Bangladesh	The Bangladesh review contains a section on finance that summarises the situation with respect to domestic resource mobilisation (tax revenue), receipts from official development assistance (ODA), foreign direct investment (FDI), and remittances.
Belgium	A specific Belgian commitment, in the spirit of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda's encouragements to that end, has been to dedicate at least 50% of its ODA to Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and fragile states by mid-2019.
Indonesia	In Indonesia reinforcement of domestic resources mobilisation is conducted through increasing public-private partnerships in financing strategic projects, developing banking services, increasing tax revenues, exploring alternative contributions from philanthropies, diaspora funds and religious social funds.
Netherlands	The Netherlands supports multi-stakeholder initiatives in producing and manufacturing countries, in which international and local stakeholders support decent work, the formation of labour unions, the prevention of child labour and better waste management. Examples include the Bangladesh Accord on Fire and Building Safety and the Pakistan Buyers' Forum in the textile industry, and the Sustainable Trade Initiative's Malawi Tea 2020 project.

Table 3 – Examples of some countries and their means of implementation from VNR 2017

Next steps

This section of the guidelines is an opportunity for the countries to state what steps are being taken or are planned to further enhance implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Some questions that could be considered include the following:

- How are the outcomes of the VNR being taken up at the national level? Is the review being disseminated?
- What steps are planned to integrate the SDGs into government activities, e.g. the budgeting process and policies and programmes of line ministries?
- Are there plans for regular review of progress at the national level on the implementation of the Agenda?

Including Annexes

Countries may include an annex with data, using the global SDG indicators to be proposed by the Statistical Commission, as well as priority indicators identified at the regional and national levels where appropriate. Countries may also consider including additional annexes covering, for instance, best practices and/or policies and strategies that have advanced implementation of the 2030 Agenda, or comments and inputs from stakeholders.

Some questions that could be considered in relation to a statistical annex include the following:

- What criteria were used for selecting the indicators in the annex?
- How does the annex supplement and support the content of the review? Consider what is more effective – a very comprehensive presentation or a selection of the most relevant indicators?
- What is the most user-friendly format for presenting the data?

Conclusion

The conclusion of the VNR could address some of the following issues/questions:

- A summary of the analysis, findings and policy bodies, the public, civil society and the private sector.
- New and emerging issues.
- What lessons can be learned from the review process?
- What support does the country need to prepare future reviews?
- What adjustments should be made to the voluntary national guidelines to ensure that they are useful?

4.2.4 Preparatory workshops and submission of VNRs

The preparatory process for the VNRs in the past has included workshops based on countries' previous experiences in participating in the VNR process. The workshops are organised by DESA/DSD and are designed to facilitate peer learning and interaction, providing a space for exchange of views, lessons learned and experiences in preparing VNRs. The workshops are intended for working-level officials who are closely engaged in the national preparatory process. Subject to availability of funding, it is anticipated that support may be provided for one participant per developing country. Additional participants from presenting countries may attend on their own funding.

The preparatory process for the VNRs for 2018 included the following

First global workshop	Based on peer learning and exchange between countries conducting VNRs in 2018 and countries that carried out VNRs in 2016 and 2017, and designed to cover key components of the preparatory process
Second global workshop	To facilitate a sharing of experiences among the 2018 VNR countries, including on lessons learned and challenges encountered. It will also feature more in-depth exchange of knowledge and guidance on the preparation and presentation process, and will facilitate discussion on how to write sections of the report and make VNR presentations at the HLPF
Third global workshop	Scheduled to take place on the Sunday prior (15 July) to the presentation of the VNRs at the HLPF, the meeting will cover final preparatory matters and engage countries in a discussion of anticipated follow-up to the VNRs

Chapter 5

Learning from the 2017 VNRs

Challenges and lessons from other countries

In order to execute the VNR process effectively, it is crucial to learn from the experiences of other countries. VNRs of countries such as Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand echoes that VNR process has been highly important and contributed to generating momentum for the implementation of the sustainable development agenda. Based on a survey from the UN, the 2016 HLPF reporting countries have cited the following learning in the preparation of their VNRs which could be of use particularly for the CSOs

- Ensuring that the SDGs are translated from the global to national level based on existing policies
- Collection of high quality data integrated with cross-cutting themes that reflects upon the challenges being faced in achieving the SDGs
- Government staff to compile the report rather than outsourcing to a consultant
- Utilising a coordination mechanism for engagement of stakeholders such as parliaments, private sector, civil society and academia with civil society for long term
- Looking at the experiences of MDG reporting
- Increasing the use of online consultations
- Enough attention should be paid to the concept of leaving no one behind and of reaching the furthest behind first that underlies the Agenda 2030
- Analysing and sharing lessons learned and providing information that can support other countries both in their preparation of a VNR and implementation of the Agenda 2030
- Sufficient time should be allocated for translation, editing and design, as well as the summarising of key messages. A well drafted executive summary of the VNR (or key messages) is critical for accessibility and broad dissemination. For the 2017 HLPF, countries were asked to prepare key messages by mid-May, which were translated in the six main official UN languages and put on the UN website. This will most likely be the case again for 2018 and should be factored into the timeline for the preparation.

Chapter 6

Civil society and their participation in VNRs for realisation of SDG 8.7

Civil society – trade unions, NGOs, teachers’ organisations and others have been and are key players in the fight against child labour, trafficking and education for all. They have played an important role in bringing down child labour from last 20 years from 246 million to 152 million. But with the recent estimates on child labour indicating the slowed progress in this issue, the role of civil society to ensure that zero child labour as envisaged under SDG 8.7 is achieved by 2025, is more crucial than ever.

Further, given that the SDGs require a new global development architecture by building on an integrated approach to the realisation of all the 17 Goals. SDG 8.7 will not be realised unless the anti-child labour /civil society understands and engages with this new architecture, recognises interlinkages between goals, and succeeds in reaching out to and working with other sectors, such as ministries in charge of youth, health, women’s rights, social affairs and environment, etc. Also, as already seen under Section 3.3, there is hardly any reporting on child labour/SDG 8.7 in VNRs, that warrants greater role and involvement of civil society in the VNR.

More specifically, below are some reasons for the anti-child labour community/civil society to be involved in the VNR process²¹:

a. To ensure that civil society, including the most marginalised and vulnerable, have a say in SDG implementation. Anti-child labour community/civil society must have a seat at the table when SDG implementation is planned, developed, evaluated and monitored to push for the realisation of SDG 8.7²² and to fulfil the pledge to leave no one behind.

b. As a mechanism to hold states to account. This is the mandated space for holding member states to account for the implementation of the entire agenda, including SDG 8.7. Civil society has a mandated role to act as a watchdog and the VNRs provide an additional tool in our arsenal.

²¹ This note has been inspired by similar note of Global Campaign for Education on SDG 4 and VNRs.

²² At national level, it provides opportunities to push for realising international commitments on child labour that governments have made (on ratification of ILO C 138, 182, etc), for example through strengthening national legal and policy framework on child labour (revise/update/implement hazardous work list, align minimum age for work with age for completion of compulsory education, strengthening labour inspectorate, mainstreaming vulnerable groups of children like girls, etc) , adequate budgetary allocation, etc.

c. **Because our participation is required.** Civil society are recognised as key stakeholders that must be involved in all efforts to realise the SDG 8.7 (Buenos Aires Declaration On Child Labour, Forced Labour And Youth Employment, IV Global Conference on Sustained Eradication of Child Labour, November, 2017²³). This gives the civil society an official seat at the table – and an obligation to deliver!

d. **To build broad-based alliances.** Following the interconnected nature of the SDGs, broad inter thematic coalitions are coming together to track progress and hold governments to account. A universal and indivisible agenda requires united and strong civil society alliances across goals and interest groups.

e. **To promote learning.** The VNR process provides an opportunity to engage with a diverse set of stakeholders and bring some non-traditional allies into the network, and acquire new information and skills that would be useful in our day-to-day work. It also allows us to raise awareness of ills of child labour, importance of decent work agenda and the benefits of education and the interlinkages with our goals and policy areas.

Opportunities to include SDG 8.7 in upcoming VNRs

Below are some of the opportunities for anti-child labour community/civil society to influence the inclusion of SDGs in upcoming VNRs:

1. The theme of the upcoming HLPF in 2019 is “Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equity”, where SDG 8, along with SDG 4, 10, 13, 16 and 17 are under review. This provides a good opportunity to ensure that Target 8.7/child labour efforts are included under the progress on realisation of SDG 8.

2. The number of countries reporting VNRs has been increasing each year since 2016, with about 50 countries committed to submit a VNR in 2019. Where countries have submitted VNRs or have committed to submit in 2019, civil society/anti-child labour community can advocate for inclusion of SDG 8.7 in upcoming/future submissions.

²³ http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_597667.pdf

See this table below for countries where Global March partners are present:

Country	Already submitted VNR	Signed up to submit VNR in 2019
Algeria	No	Yes
Argentina	Yes, in 2017	
Bangladesh	Yes, in 2017	
Benin	Yes, in 2017/2018	
Brazil	Yes, in 2017	Yes
Chile	Yes, 2017	Yes
Columbia	Yes, in 2016/2018	
Costa Rica	Yes, in 2017	
Ivory Coast	No	Yes
El Salvador	Yes, in 2017	Yes
Ghana	No	Yes
Guatemala	Yes, in 2017	Yes
Honduras	Yes, in 2017	
India	Yes, in 2017	
Indonesia	Yes, in 2017	Yes
Kenya	Yes, in 2017	
Nepal	Yes, in 2017	
Niger	Yes, in 2018	
Pakistan	No	Yes
Panama	Yes, in 2017	
Paraguay	Yes, in 2018	
Peru	Yes, in 2017	
Philippines	Yes, in 2016	Yes
Sri Lanka	Yes, in 2018	
Togo	Yes, in 2016/2017/2018	
Uganda	Yes, in 2017	
Tanzania		Yes

Table 4 – VNR status of countries where Global March partners are present

6.1 Way for civil society to participate in VNR process²⁴

There are several ways for Global March and its country partners to engage in VNR process for achievement of SDG 8.7. These are described briefly below.

6.1.1 National Level engagement in the Voluntary National Review (VNR) Process

As per the 2030 Agenda, all Member States must consult relevant stakeholders in the Voluntary National Review Process. This provides many opportunities for civil society/Global March partners in countries to engage with their government, either individually or in coalition with other local CSOs.

²⁴ From note developed by Plan New York

- (1) Join a relevant in-country network to engage in national consultations during the Voluntary National Review Process, and for follow-up after a VNR has been submitted.
- (2) **Consider joining membership of these worldwide groups. By joining their respective email listservs, you will be able to be in touch with other CSOs either in your country or regionally:**
 - Relevant [UN Major Groups and Other Stakeholders \(MGoS\)](#)²⁵. Within the NY UN Space, we engage with the [Women's Major Group](#)²⁶, the [Major Group on Children and Youth](#)²⁷ and the Child Focused Agencies (NYC)²⁸.
 - [The "Transparency, Accountability and Participation" \(TAP\) Network](#)²⁹: an informal coalition of over 100 civil society organisations working on "TAP" and governance issues around the Post-2015 agenda.
 - [Together 2030](#)³⁰: A civil society initiative promoting and tracking progress of the 2030 Agenda.

6.2.2 Regional Level engagement in the Voluntary National Review (VNR) Process

- (1) Participate in annual Regional UN Economic Commission Meetings leading up to the HLPF. Regional SDG Preparation Meetings can be found [here](#)³¹ (scroll down to the "Preparation Section.")
- (2) Leading up the annual HLPF, there are Expert Group Meetings on the SDGs under review for that year. These typically begin in January of that year, and run through April.
- (3) The UN MGoS, including the Women's Major Group and the Major Group on Children and Youth will often offer funding support to attend these Regional UN Economic Commission Meetings.

6.2.3 Global Level engagement in the Voluntary National Review (VNR) Process

- (1) Within the NY UN Space, engage with the [Women's Major Group](#)³², the [Major Group on Children and Youth](#)³³ and the Child Focused Agencies (NYC).
 - Leading up to the HLPF, the MGoS will submit a position paper to ECOSOC that will then become a part of the **official** documentation of HLPF.
 - The UN MGoS, including the Women's Major Group and the Major Group on Children and Youth will often offer funding support to attend the HLPF.

²⁵ <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/majorgroups/about>

²⁶ <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/majorgroups/women>

²⁷ <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/majorgroups/childrenandyouth>

²⁸ The CFAs in the NYC UN Space are comprised of Plan International, SOS Children's Villages, Save the Children, Child Fund Alliance, World Vision and UNICEF.

²⁹ <http://tapnetwork2030.org/>

³⁰ <http://www.together2030.org/>

³¹ <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf/2018#prep>

³² <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/majorgroups/women>

³³ <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/majorgroups/childrenandyouth>

(2) While at the HLPF, representatives of the major groups and other relevant stakeholders are given a platform to:

- Attend all official meetings of the forum;
- To have access to all official information and documents;
- To intervene in official meetings;
- To submit documents and present written and oral contributions;
- To make recommendations;
- To participate in side events;
- To organise side events and round tables, in cooperation with Member States and the Secretariat.

(3) Apply to at [host a side event HLPF](#)³⁴ in 2019 when SDGs 4, 8, 10, and 16 will be under review. Please note, in order to have an effective side event, **it is crucial to partner with a member state and/or a UN Agency, and to place the event inside of the UN**, (as opposed to an external venue).

(4) **Participate in SDG Indicator Working Groups:** (e.g., CSO side of the [IAEG-SDG]), the [Interagency Expert Group of the SDGs](#) (IAEG-SDGs)³⁵ is a group formed by the UN Statistical Commission (UN-Stats). The group meets biannually to discuss and further develop the SDG Indicator Framework. The Meetings are split into two sessions: A Members Only session, during which only IAEG-SDG Members can be in the room; and a Plenary Session, during which all stakeholders, including CSOs, can be in the room/ give remarks if granted the opportunity. Generally, the IAEG-SDG follows this agenda:

- Review the tier classification
- Discuss the implementation of the guidelines on data flows and global data reporting and the development of a document on best practices in global data reporting
- Review proposals for additional indicators
- Discuss progress made on the work stream on data disaggregation
- Share experiences on implementing monitoring of the SDGs
 - **Prior to- and during (Plenary session) the IAEG-SDG meetings, there is a CSO Consultation process.** This is a great opportunity to ensure that relevant indicators are brought to the table when the IAEG-SDG decides on the indicator framework.

³⁴ https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/17817HLPF_2018_Side_Events_Guidelines.pdf

³⁵ <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/iaeg-sdgs/>



GLOBAL MARCH

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