Integrating Voluntary Local Reviews into Voluntary National Review Processes

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VNRs and VLRs

- In the UN resolution to adopt the SDGs, UN member States committed to "*fully engage in conducting regular and inclusive reviews of progress at the subnational, national, regional and global levels.*" (A/RES/70/71)

- While the SDGs are global, their achievement will depend on our ability to make them a reality at subnational levels.

- "*We commit to involving and empowering local authorities to ensure local ownership of SDGs, in particular by citizens, community and local organizations and to best translate national development priorities into local realities and in this regard, note voluntary local reviews as a useful tool to show progress and foster exchange in local implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals.*" - HLPF MD 2021

VNRs and VLRs

- Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) are a process through which countries assess and present progress made in achieving the SDGs and the pledge to leave no one behind.

- Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs) are a vehicle for local and regional governments to report their progress on the SDGs

- Their shared objective is to present a snapshot of where a country or local authority stands in SDG implementation, with a view to help accelerate progress through experience sharing, peer-learning, identifying gaps and good practices and mobilizing partnerships

What does integrating VNRs-VLRs Mean?

- Integrating the SDGs in the design, implementation and monitoring of local and regional development plans and putting local and regional gvts at the center of SDGs implementation

- Strengthening multilevel governance to achieve the 2030 Agenda

- Promoting horizontal policy coherence (breaking silos) across sectoral departments of local and regional governments and countries to manage trade-offs across policy domains in the implementation of SDGs and NDPs

- Promoting vertical policy coherence and co-ordination of priorities across local, regional and national governments – SDGs localization agenda

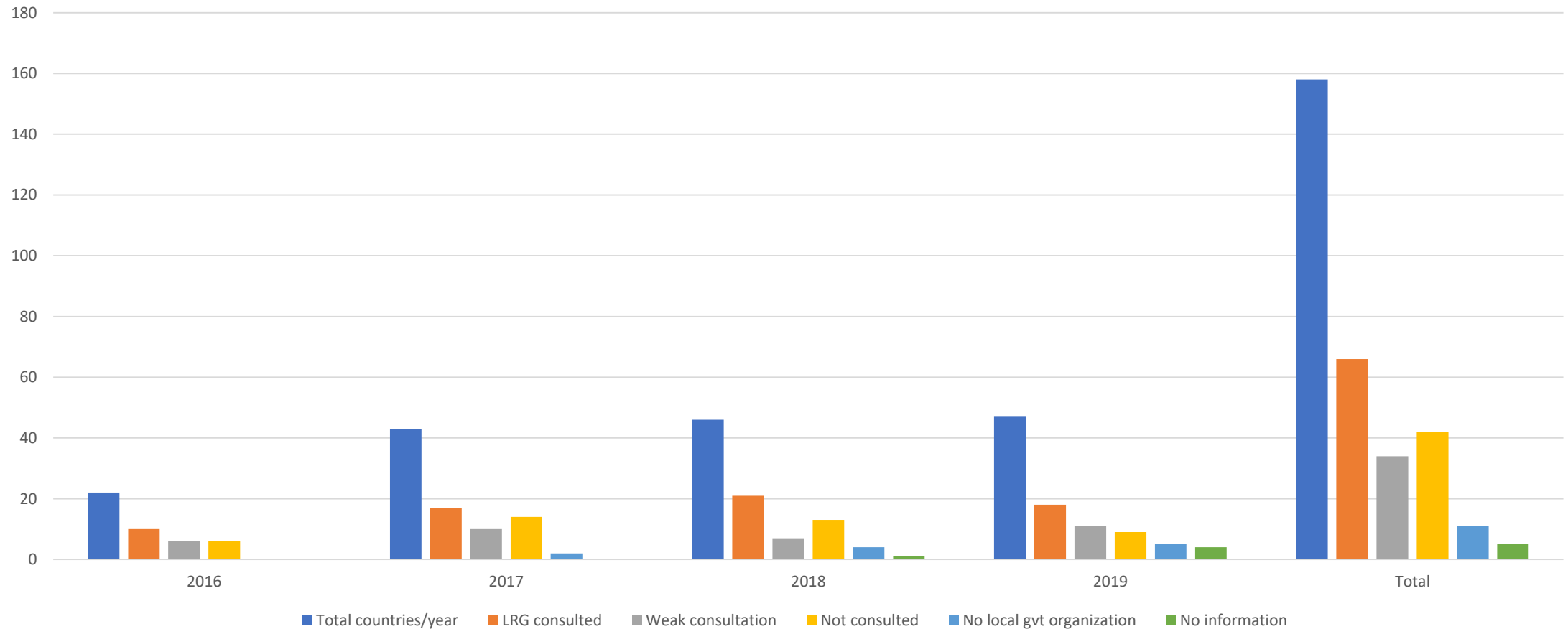## **What does integrating VNRs-VLRs mean?, cont'd**

- A way to engage citizens into local action to:

  - promote shared understanding of complex national and local problems

  - devise integrated solutions that benefit from broader societal consensus

  - ensure ownership and commitment to possible solutions

  - ensure no one is left behind

- Local and regional gvts and other actors (development partners, CSOs, private sector, academia) are crucial to ensure the process is inclusive and accountable

LGAs' participation in the preparation of VNRs

- Between 2016-19, only 34% of countries that reported to the HLPF engaged local and regional governments in national co-ordination mechanisms

- Engagement was defined as weak in 15% of countries or inexistent in 43% of countries

- OECD-CoR survey – only 23% of subnational authorities collaborate with national governments on SDG projects

- VLRs have been initiated in a growing number of countries : Kenya, Uganda, South Africa (Cape Town), Zimbabwe (Harare, Victoria Falls)

- The Gambia amongst many countries doing both a VNR and VLRs in 2022

Local and Regional Governments' Participation in the Preparation of VNRs, 2016-19 (source: UCLG and the Global Taskforce of Cities and Local Gvts annual survey)

Legend: Total countries/year · LRG consulted · Weak consultation · Not consulted · No local gvt organization · No information
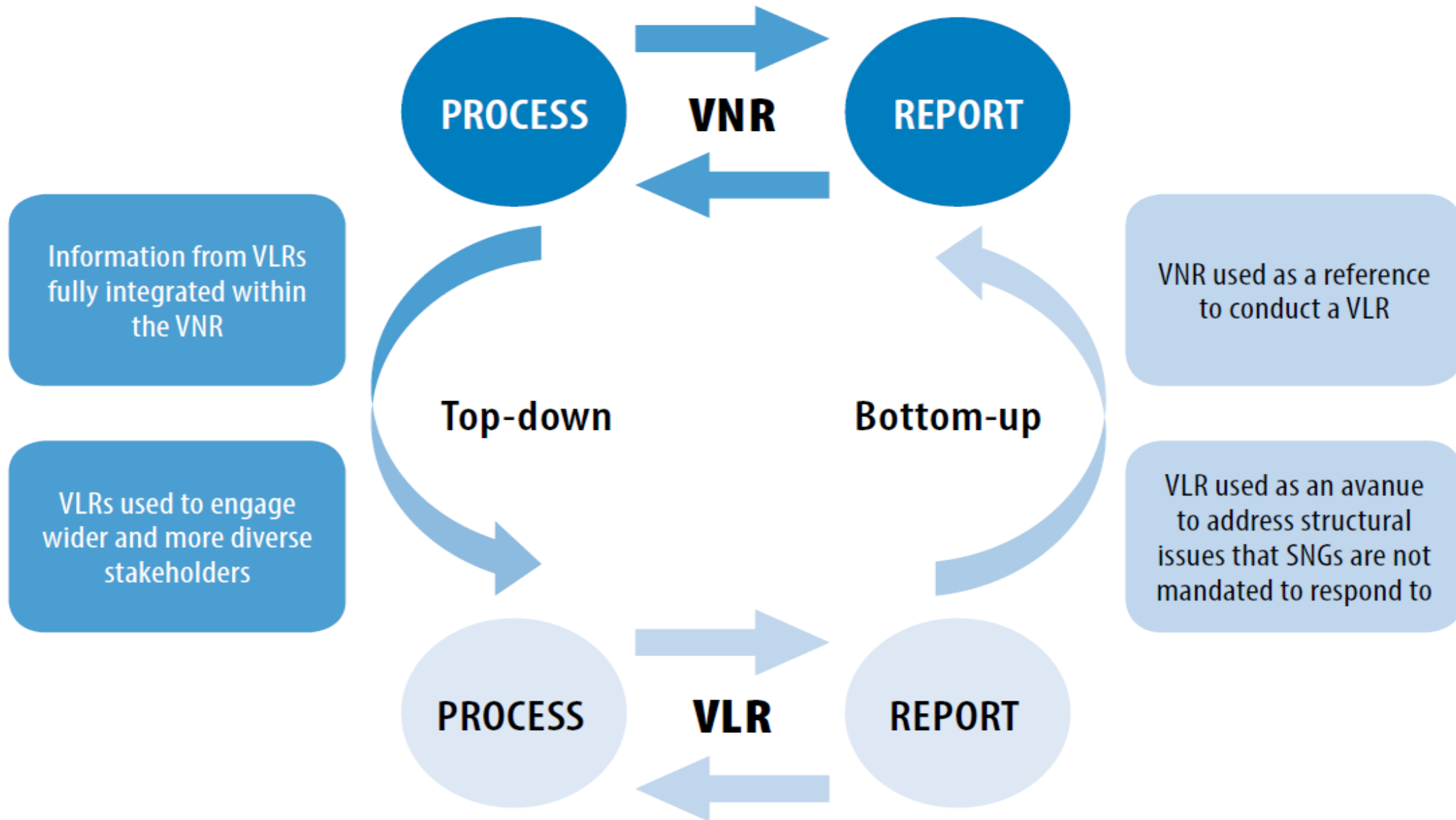
Connecting VLRs with VNRs

- VLRs help monitor and evaluate progress on SDG implementation and also facilitate social inclusion, multi-level coordination, and prioritization in planning and budgeting.

- Foster policy coherence and coordination among national and local efforts

- Enhance stakeholder engagement and awareness of the SDGs at the subnational level

- Amplify the voices of the poor and people living in vulnerable situations and help in ensuring no one is left behind

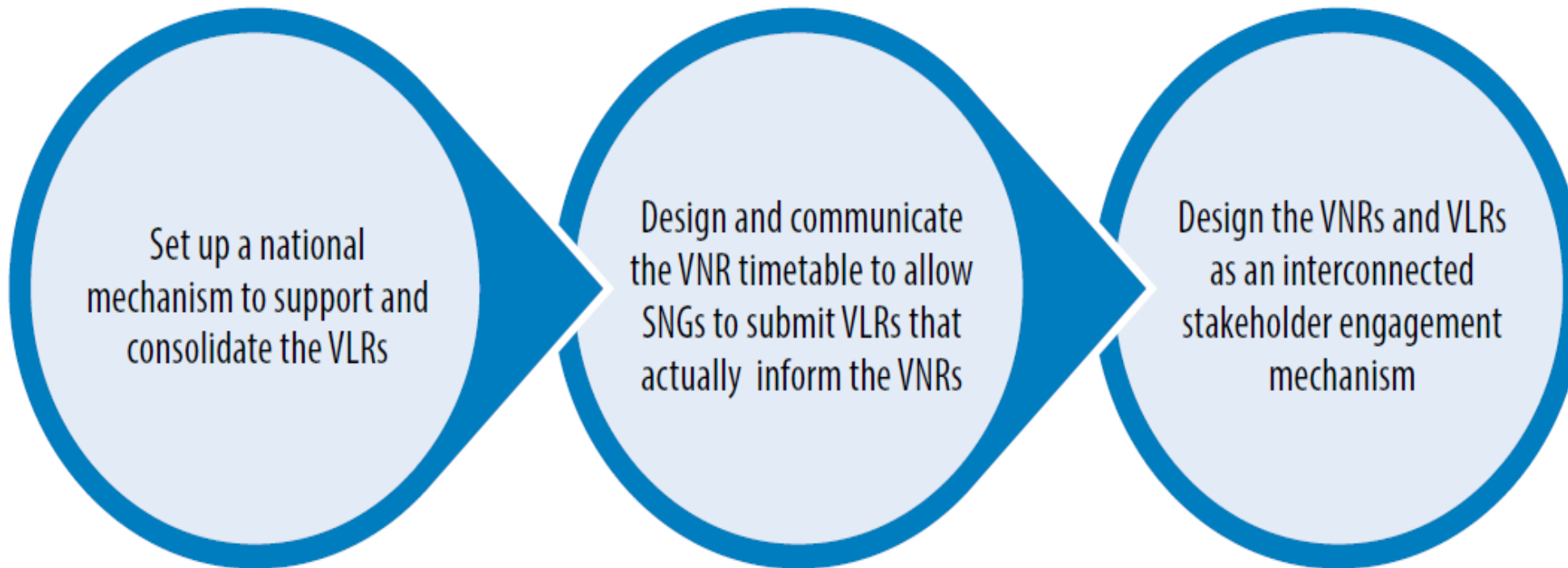- Can highlight innovative local resource mobilizing solutions

Connecting VNRs with VLRs, cont'd

- Many of the 2030 Agenda's 169 targets rely on the contributions and responsibilities of local and subnational governments.

- Cities and local governments are providers of basic public goods and services-housing, health, education, food systems, water & sanitation

- Hence, they play an important role in delivering on the SDGs and VLRs provide a fuller picture of SDG implementation and challenges

- Subnational governments also have an important role in local resource mobilization, e.g. mobilizing property tax.

- Showcase and bring forward unique but scalable local solutions to

Operationalizing VLR-VNR integration

Actions to consider when integrating VLRs and VNRs

Set up a national mechanism to support and consolidate the VLRs

Design and communicate the VNR timetable to allow SNGs to submit VLRs that actually inform the VNRs

Design the VNRs and VLRs as an interconnected stakeholder engagement mechanism

The Kenya VLR Process

VI. Roadmap is to roll-out VLRs to all 47 counties (to have a bottom up VNR process –where VLRs contribute to the national VNR)

V. Private sector (Kenya Private Sector Alliance/KEPSA) and CSOs (Kenya SDGs Forum) produced complementarity VNRs which were annexes to the Kenya VNR 2020 (this was also the case in 2017)

IV. Five VLRs were an input in the 2020 Kenya VNR – best practices at SDGs reporting at sub-national levels

III. Five Counties (Busia, Kisumu, Kwale, Marsabit and Taita Taveta) piloted VLRs in 2019 (supported by the UN)

II. Training of SDGs Champions from all 47 counties in 2019 (supported by the UN)

I. SDGs were mainstreamed in County Intergated Development Plans (CIDPs) in 2018 (supported by the UN)

The VNR and VLR preparatory processes: Issues to consider

- What is the role of local and regional governments in SDG implementation?

- How are VLR processes linked to VNR processes?

- What are the key elements and milestones in the process?

- Who leads the process and who is engaged? What works and why?

- What are the lessons learned from the process and how has it contributed to the local implementation of the 2030 Agenda?

- Sharing of data needs to be prioritized, to aid consistency on data collection

Why Integrating VNRs & VLRs Is Critical in a post-COVID-19 World

- With 8 years left to achieve the 2030 Agenda, countries must build back better and find ways to accelerate the implementation of the SDGs

- One way to accelerate implementation and fast-track progress is to mobilize subnational governments to pursue the SDGs at their level.

- SDG localization has been increasingly recognized as a strong driver of the 2030 Agenda, including by the HLPF

- Scaling up SDG localization requires system-wide alignment, enhanced local governance, and multi-stakeholder and partnership

Why Integrating VNRs & VLRs is Critical in a post-COVID-19 World, cont'd

- Integration requires developing effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels

- Ensuring more responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision making processes

- It also requires system-wide alignment, enhanced local governance, and multi-stakeholder and partnership collaboration

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Challenges to Integrating VNRs and VLRs

- Lack of political will – issues of devolution, provision of technical and financial support to local gvts to implement local SDGs strategies

- Local capacity constraints for addressing the SDGs and inadequate financial resources

- Lack of policy coherence and coordination among national and local efforts (VNRs & VLRs)

- Lack of disaggregated data and capacities to perform subnational monitoring

- Limited awareness of the SDGs and stakeholder consultations at the subnational levels