Voluntary National Reviews and the Role of Major Groups and other Stakeholders

Emily Hosek
United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
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What is a Voluntary National Review (VNR)?

- Voluntary National Reviews are part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development’s follow-up and review mechanism.
- The 2030 Agenda encourages Member States to "conduct regular and inclusive reviews of progress at the national and sub-national levels, which are country-led and country-driven" (paragraph 79)
Principles of Voluntary National Reviews

Voluntary
encourage reporting and include developed and developing countries

State-led
country driven reviews of progress at national and sub-national levels

Platform for partnerships
including through the participation of major groups and other relevant stakeholders

Learning experience
facilitate the sharing of experiences, including successes, challenges and lessons learned, part of a process

National circumstances
reviews in accordance with national circumstances, policies and priorities, together with relevant partners

Open, Inclusive, Transparent
Facilitates communication with all stakeholders
UN Secretary-General’s voluntary common reporting guidelines

- To promote comparability and consistency and help countries structure their VNRs, the Secretary General has developed a set of common reporting guidelines.
SG’s Guideline Highlights

VNRs should:

✓ be open, inclusive, participatory and transparent for all people and will support reporting by all relevant stakeholders.

✓ be people-centred, gender-sensitive, respect human rights and have a particular focus on the poorest, most vulnerable and those furthest behind.

✓ maintain a longer-term orientation, identify achievements, challenges, gaps and critical success factors and support countries in making informed policy choices.

✓ Help to mobilize the necessary means of implementation and partnerships, support the identification of solutions and best practices and promote the coordination and effectiveness of the international development system.
How can the VNR process support national implementation of the 2030 Agenda?

- Catalyzes action!
- Strengthens political will, national ownership, institutions and coordination
- Identifies areas where support is needed
- Provides an important communication tool
- Changes mindsets
- Draws lessons and provides critical reflections on the process
- Provides impetus to continue national implementation after the VNR has been presented at the HLPF
Who is engaged in the VNRs?

- National Government
  - Finance & Planning
  - Line Ministries
  - National Statistical Office

- Stakeholders
  - Scientific & Technological Community
  - Academia
  - Philanthropic Institutions
  - NGOs
  - Business & Industry
  - Trade Unions
  - Persons with Disabilities
  - Older Persons
  - Indigenous Peoples
  - Faith/Religious Groups
  - Migrants & Their Families
  - Farmers
  - Women
  - Children & Youth
  - Others...

- Parliamentary Oversight Bodies
  - UN Country Team
  - Supreme Audit Institution
  - Standing Oversight Bodies
  - Other Oversight Institutions, incl. Human Rights Institutions
Global Status of VNRs

STATUS OF VNRS 2016 - 2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Prepared and Announced</th>
<th>Not Prepared</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>18</td>
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<td>AP</td>
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<td>WEOG</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>26</td>
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Regional Division of 2019 VNRs

- **Europe**: 10
- **Asia Pacific**: 16
- **Latin America & The Caribbean**: 6
- **Africa**: 18
### 2019 VNR Countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FIRST TIME PRESENTERS (40)</th>
<th>SECOND TIME PRESENTERS (8)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Algeria</td>
<td>Iceland</td>
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<td>Bosnia and Herzegovina</td>
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<td>Palau</td>
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VNR Handbook

- Supplement to the SG’s guidelines
- Provides basic, practical information on the steps that countries may take when preparing VNRs
- Available in English, Arabic, Chinese, French, and Spanish
Best Practices in VNR Development

- Engage a broad range of stakeholders early on
- Focus on quality, not quantity
- Include a statistical annex
- Address implementation of all 17 SDGs
- Include analysis, lessons learned and detailed examples
- Avoid mere listings of strategies and programmes
- Showcase both strengths and weaknesses
- Identify areas where additional support is needed
- Spell out the next steps in implementation
Stakeholder Engagement in the VNR Process
Stakeholder Engagement in VNR Process

01 Inputs
Numerous countries have requested inputs from stakeholders and organized consultations to collect them.

02 Review
Governments have shared draft VNR reports with stakeholders for their feedback and comments.

03 Represent
Some included Stakeholder representatives in their official delegation sitting on the podium during the VNR presentation at the HLPF, ready to answer potential question.

04 Present
Several countries have included presentations and comments from different stakeholders in their 15 minute Presentation or in their official report.
Levels of Participation - Inform

In the **Maldives**, the government works with the official “Public Service Media” in disseminating information related to the SDGs. Capacity building workshops have been organized for journalists from various media in order to enhance and develop their skills to report on the SDGs.

In the **Netherlands**, the Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG) launched the Municipalities4Global Goals campaign to promote awareness of the SDGs among municipalities and help them contribute to the goals.
In **Sierra Leone**, consultations were held both in the capital and in each of the country’s districts. The consultations engaged officials from the federal government, parliament, local governments, the private sector, trade unions, civil society and universities on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in the country.

**Brazil** established the online portal “Participa.br”, a social media instrument providing participation tools for citizens, networks, social movements and organizations, enabling dialogue among governmental bodies and society, through public consultations, debates, conferences and online events.

**Chile**, in cooperation with UNDP, designed focus groups that sought to prioritize the voice and participation of different populations such as persons with disabilities, immigrants, and indigenous peoples.
The Australian government along with Global Compact Network Australia, have set up a website to provide Australia with a live and ongoing platform to centralize and showcase action being taken across government, business, civil society and academia to advance the SDGs in the Australian context. Organizations that are undertaking concrete initiatives to help Australia deliver on the Sustainable Development goals are invited to submit case studies to the platform’s database which include the initiatives’ impact.

Levels of Participation - Involve/Collaborate

The **Estonian** Sustainable Development Commission is an advisory body consisting of civil society umbrella organizations and covers different fields of sustainable development. The Commission meets 4-5 times per year to discuss drafts of strategic action plans before they are adopted by the government and to publish focus reports with policy recommendations.

In **Norway**, the indigenous peoples’ assembly, the Sámeddigi (Sami Parliament) engages in dialogues on the 2030 Agenda with line ministries and formal consultation mechanisms. Consultations have strengthened the Sámediggi’s role as a representative voice for the Sami people and increased the awareness of Sami issues within the government. Sami culture is taken into consideration in policies particularly for fisheries and ecosystems protection, restoration and sustainable use of natural resources.
How to get engaged when your country is presenting a VNR

VNR focal points on website
https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf/2019

- Find out about opportunities for engagement (coordination structures, stakeholder engagement plans)
- Plan engagement with other civil society organisations
- Participate in national consultations
- Review the VNR report
- Engage at the HLPF
- Follow-up with government – call for a dialogue
Regional MGoS Coordination Mechanisms

http://asiapacificrcem.org/

Latin American Regional Coordination MGoS Coordination Mechanism
Resources

• UN Secretary-General’s updated voluntary common reporting guidelines for VNRs at the HLPF

• Handbook for VNR Preparations

• Q&A for VNRs at the 2019 HLPF


• Register to join the Major Groups and other Stakeholders HLPF Coordination Mechanism here

• All the above can be found at HLPF VNR database https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/vnrs/

• Together2030 Report on civil society engagement in VNRs

Thank you!

Emily Hosek
UN DESA Office of Intergovernmental Support and Coordination for Sustainable Development

We look forward to your participation!
For the latest information and to register (May 2019), visit https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf/2019
Contact link on website