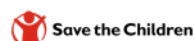# PROGRESSING NATIONAL SDGs IMPLEMENTATION:

An independent assessment of the voluntary national review reports submitted to the United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in 2020

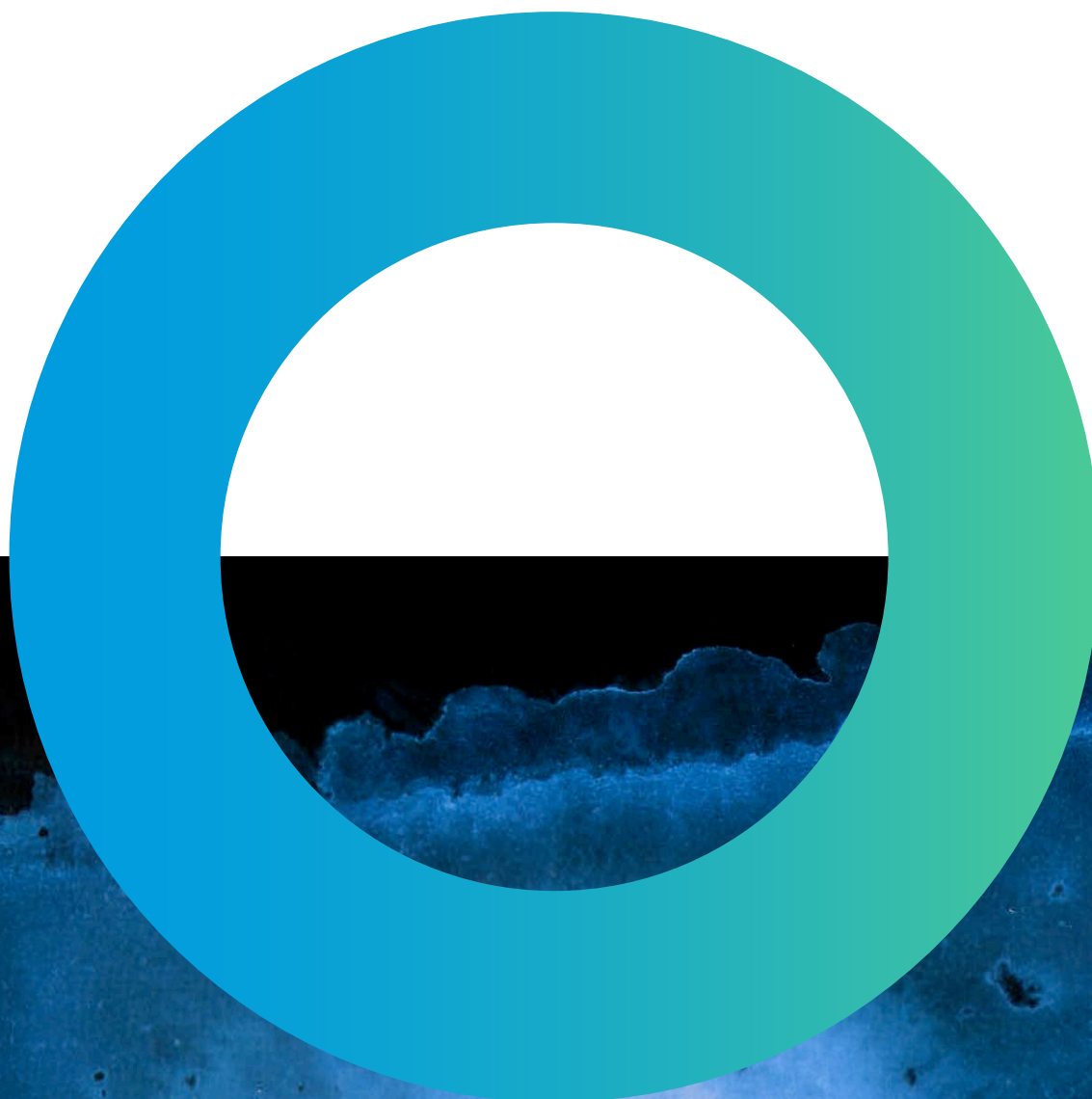The **Fifth Edition** in an annual series commissioned by civil society organizations

Acknowledgments

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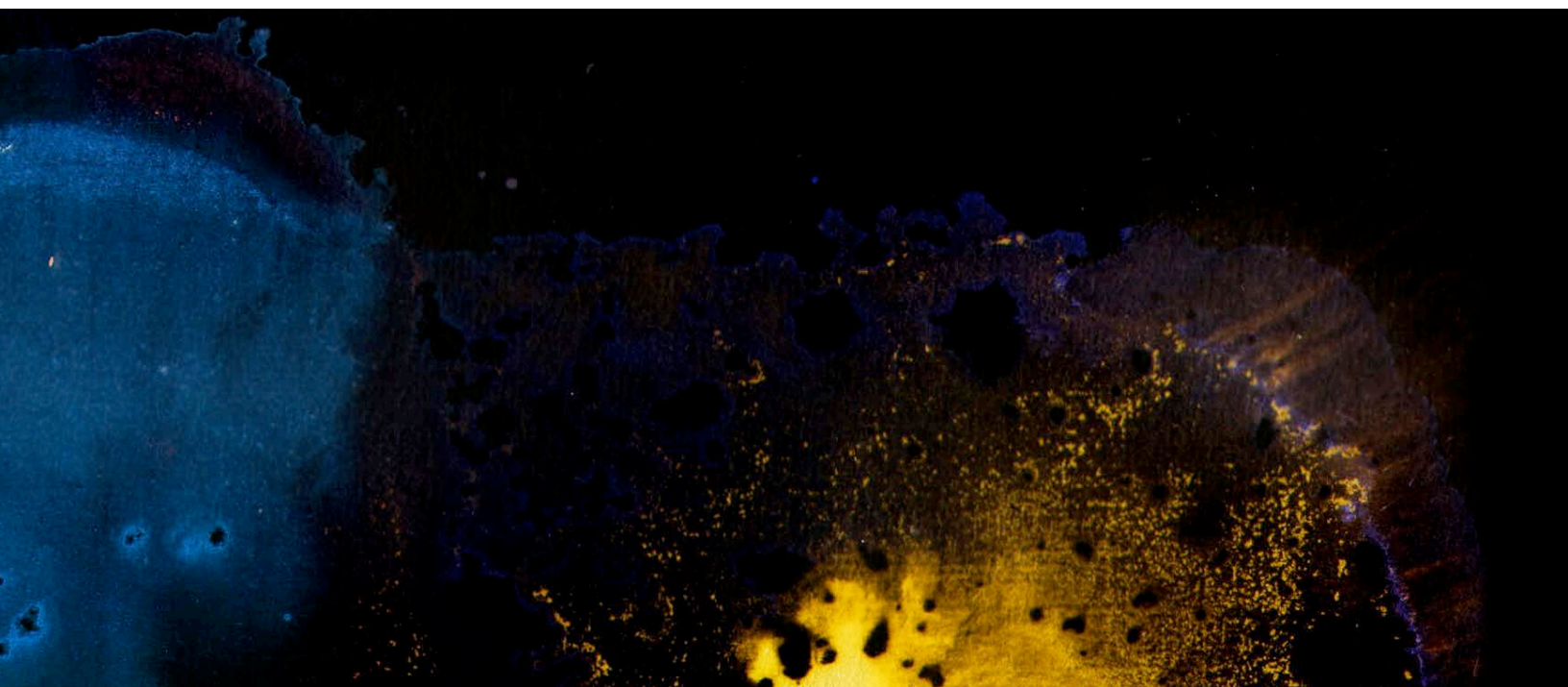
ANNEXES

ANNEX 1. VNR REPORTS REVIEWED

All 47 VNR reports are available through the United Nations Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform. Table A1 provides an overview of the countries reviewed. Of these countries, the majority (17) are high-income, according to World Bank country classifications. Twelve countries are upper-middle-income, nine are high income, and nine are low-income. Sixteen countries from Africa (all from sub-Saharan Africa except for Libya and Morocco), nine from Asia, nine from Europe, nine from Latin America and the Caribbean, and four from Oceania reported, according to United Nations classifications.

Table A1. Countries reviewed in the analysis of 2020 VNR reports			
Country	**Region[1]**	**Sub-region[2]**	**Income level[3]**
Argentina	Americas	South America	Upper-middle income country
Armenia	Asia	Western Asia	Upper-middle income country
Austria	Europe	Western Europe	High-income country
Bangladesh	Asia	Southern Asia	Lower-middle income country
Barbados	Americas	Caribbean	High income country
Benin	Africa	Western Africa	Lower-middle income country
Brunei Darussalam	Asia	South-eastern Asia	High-income country
Bulgaria	Europe	Eastern Europe	Upper-middle income country
Burundi	Africa	Eastern Africa	Low-income country
Comoros	Africa	Eastern Africa	Lower-middle income country
Costa Rica	Americas	Central America	Upper-middle income country
Democratic Republic of the Congo	Africa	Middle Africa	Low-income country
Ecuador	Americas	South America	Upper-middle income country
Estonia	Europe	Northern Europe	High-income country
Finland	Europe	Northern Europe	High-income country
Gambia	Africa	Western Africa	Low-income country

1. According to UN classifications.
2. According to UN classifications.
3. According to World Bank classifications for the 2021 fiscal year.

Country	Region[1]	Sub-region[2]	Income level[3]
Georgia	Asia	Western Asia	Upper-middle income country
Honduras	Americas	Central America	Lower-middle income country
India	Asia	Southern Asia	Lower-middle income country
Kenya	Africa	Eastern Africa	Lower-middle income country
Kyrgyz Republic	Asia	Central Asia	Lower-middle income country
Liberia	Africa	Western Africa	Low-income country
Libya	Africa	Northern Africa	Upper-middle income country
Malawi	Africa	Eastern Africa	Low-income country
Micronesia	Oceania	Micronesia	Lower-middle income country
Moldova	Europe	Eastern Europe	Lower-middle income country
Morocco	Africa	Northern Africa	Lower-middle income country
Mozambique	Africa	Eastern Africa	Low-income country
Nepal	Asia	Southern Asia	Lower-middle income country
Niger	Africa	Western Africa	Low-income country
Nigeria	Africa	Western Africa	Lower-middle income country
North Macedonia	Europe	Southern Europe	Upper-middle income country
Panama	Americas	Central America	High-income country
Papua New Guinea	Oceania	Melanesia	Lower-middle income country
Peru	Americas	South America	Upper-middle income country
Russian Federation	Europe	Eastern Europe	Upper-middle income country
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Americas	Caribbean	Upper-middle income country
Samoa	Oceania	Polynesia	Upper-middle income country
Seychelles	Africa	Eastern Africa	High-income country
Slovenia	Europe	Southern Europe	High-income country
Solomon Islands	Oceania	Melanesia	Lower-middle income country
Syria	Asia	Western Asia	Low-income country
Trinidad and Tobago	Americas	Caribbean	High-income country
Uganda	Africa	Eastern Africa	Low-income country
Ukraine	Europe	Eastern Europe	Lower-middle income country
Uzbekistan	Asia	Central Asia	Lower-middle income country
Zambia	Africa	Eastern Africa	Lower-middle income country

ANNEX 2. METHODOLOGY

The review follows the assessment framework prepared for previous editions of the *Progressing National SDGs Implementation*[4] report. It examines countries in terms of 10 pillars of implementation. The framework complements the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs' synthesis of VNR reports. The report by UN DESA provides greater detail on actions undertaken at the goal level but does not assess VNR reports in terms of good practices and where they could be improved. The 10 pillars of analysis are listed below.

1. Leadership, governance and institutional mechanisms
2. Baseline or gap analysis
3. Integration and policy coherence
4. Leave no one behind
5. Raising awareness and creating ownership of the 2030 Agenda
6. Stakeholder engagement
7. Implementing the 2030 Agenda
8. Partnership to realize the 2030 Agenda
9. Measurement and reporting

These 10 pillars of analysis are presented in the three sections in the report that focus on 1) governance, institutional mechanisms and engagement, 2) policies for 2030 Agenda implementation, and 3) implementing the 2030 Agenda. The assessment framework also gives special attention to the spirit of the 2030 Agenda through, for example, the examination of the principles of the 2030 Agenda. Some changes were made to the framework in 2020 to reflect the global COVID-19 pandemic however this was done with efforts to ensure ongoing comparability in the series. Details were added to improve the overall analysis, particularly with regard to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, and additional sub-components were added to obtain more granular data on leaving no one behind and to assess the extent to which VNR reports used unofficial data. These are indicated in the table below by a *.

The framework was initially tested and revised for the 2017 edition of *Progressing National SDG Implementation.* For open-ended components of the analysis (instances in which researchers could not provide a set answer, such as yes or no), the text was drawn directly from the VNR reports ensuring the highest level of accuracy. In some cases, researchers paraphrased information when the text from VNR reports was more than 200 words. Information from available civil society reports was also included in the framework. For set answer components, relevant information was listed in a 'notes' section of the framework. For open-ended components, text from civil society reports is available directly following the text from VNR reports. For both set answer and open-ended components, researchers were asked to include any relevant information that also arose related to COVID-19, as outlined in the VNR report. All data sets were reviewed by one researcher to ensure the consistency of data collection.

In terms of data sources, the analysis presented in this review is based solely on official VNR reports and where available, civil society reports. Secondary literature was used in a limited number of instances to show consistency between the analysis in the review and those carried out by others. No additional research was conducted to verify the accuracy and confirm the validity of the information governments included in their reports. The lack of additional research is a clear limitation of the findings.

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4.   The 2021 edition of the framework was revised to include information related to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda (new data collection components) but remains largely consistent with the framework used for the review of 2019 VNR reports. The 2017 edition built on the framework set out in Bond et al's 2016 assessment of the VNR reports. See Cutter, Amy. 2016. Progressing national SDGs implementation: Experiences and recommendations from 2016. London: Bond. The second edition built on the eight pillars of analysis by adding two more that focus on partnerships to realize Agenda 2030 and the means of implementation. In 2018, the framework was slightly revised to include greater details on leaving no one behind, environmental dimensions of the 2030 Agenda and additional information on budgeting under means of implementation.

Table A2. Assessment framework		
Sub-component	**Description**	**Options**
Demographic information		
Country name	Provide country name	Short version, e.g. Ethiopia rather than the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia.
Region	Based on United Nations Statistics Division classifications.	The region as stipulated in the classification.
Sub-Region	Based on the United Nations Statistics Division classifications.	The intermediate region as stipulated in the classification.
Income level	World Bank classification for the 2021 fiscal year.	Low-income country.
		Lower-middle-income country.
		Upper-middle-income country.
		High-income country.
Incorporation of the SDGs into national frameworks and policies		
SDGs in national frameworks and policies	Refers to how governments are incorporating the SDGs into national frameworks and policies broadly.	SDGs incorporated into national development plans and related policies and frameworks.
		SDGs incorporated through a national SDG implementation strategy.
		SDGs incorporated into national development plans and related policies and frameworks and through the use of a national SDG implementation strategy.
		SDGs have not been incorporated through a national strategy or into national development plans and related policies and frameworks.
		Not articulated in VNR report.
Principles of Agenda 2030 – human rights-based approach	Whether the VNR report refers to the use of a human rights-based approach.	Yes; Indicate if the report refers specifically to the human rights-based approach or has a strong human rights focus. Include a description of the human rights-based approach if explained, otherwise indicate that it is referred to but not defined.
		No
Principles of Agenda 2030 – universality	Whether the VNR report refers to universality.	Yes
		No
Principles of Agenda 2030 - leave no one behind	Whether the VNR report refers to leaving no one behind.	Yes, Indicate if there is a dedicated chapter or if cross-cutting (or both).
		No
Principles of Agenda 2030 – planetary boundaries	Whether the VNR refers to planetary boundaries.	Yes; List if the nine planetary boundaries are specifically listed or if not the specific boundaries, what other planetary impacts are mentioned such as water, biodiversity, climate change, land use, etc., for the nine planetary boundaries see http://www.stockholmresilience.org/research/planetary-boundaries/planetary-boundaries/about-the-research/the-nine-planetary-boundaries.html.
		No
Principles of Agenda 2030 – inter-generational responsibility	Whether the VNR refers to inter-generational responsibility.	Yes, Indicate if this concept is integrated throughout the report or a one-off mention.
		No

Sub-component	Description	Options
Leadership, governance and institutional mechanisms		
Governance arrangement for delivering the SDGs	Refers to the use of existing or new governance mechanisms to oversee SDG implementation and ensuring coordination.	Existing council or committee.
		Creation of new council or committee.
		No council or committee with implementation through government institutions.
		Council or committee established with implementation through the lead department.
		Existing council or committee with implementation through the lead department.
		Creation of specialized office.
		Council or committee established with implementation through government institutions.
		Other
		Unclear from the VNR report.
		Not articulated in the VNR report.
Leadership on SDG implementation	Refers to the key government actor responsible for leading on SDG implementation.	Head of government or state.
		Individual cabinet minister.
		Multiple cabinet ministers.
		Parliamentary committee.
		Specific SDG implementation body or committee outside parliament.
		Lead department.
		Other.
		Not articulated in the VNR report.
Non-state actor official engagement in governance arrangements	Refers to if and how non-state actors are included in official SDG implementation governing structures.	Provide direct text from the VNR report or, if longer than 200 words, provide a summary.
Regional coordination on the SDGs	The extent to which the country is engaged in coordinating efforts at the regional level. Must refer to specific SDG related activities.	Participates.
		Does not participate.
		Not articulated in the VNR report.
Activities at the regional level	Description of how regional coordination on the SDGs is occurring.	Provide direct text from the VNR report or, if longer than 200 words, provide a summary.
		VNR makes no mention of regional activities.
Engagement in special country groupings on the SDGs	Description of the grouping to which the country belongs (for example, landlocked, a small island, least developed, etc.) and the activities it is pursuing, as noted in the VNR report. Must refer to specific SDG related activities.	Provide direct text from the VNR report or, if longer than 200 words, provide a summary.
		VNR report makes no mention of participation in country groupings.

Sub-component	Description	Options
Baseline or gap analysis		
Gap analysis or baseline study carried out	Evidence that the country conducted a gap analysis or baseline study to assess existing policies concerning the SDGs.	An assessment carried out for all SDGs.
		An assessment carried out for some SDGs.
		Assessment planned.
		No assessment carried out.
		Not articulated in the VNR report.
Content of the gap analysis/ baseline study	Description of the key elements examined through the gap analysis or baseline study conducted.	Provide direct text from the VNR report or, if longer than 200 words, provide a summary. Note whether they looked at policies, data or polices and data.
		No assessment carried out.
		Not articulated in the VNR report.
Gaps identified	Areas identified in the VNR report where additional progress is needed as a result of the gap/baseline analysis. This information is sometimes found in the description of individual goals (i.e. areas where more efforts needed).	Provide direct text from the VNR report or, if longer than 200 words, provide a summary.
		No assessment carried out.
		Not articulated in the VNR report.
Integration and policy coherence		
Overall SDG coverage by the VNR report	This refers to the composition of SDGs examined in the VNR report.	All SDGs examined.
		SDGs covered by the HLPF theme examined.
		A limited set of country-selected SDGs examined.
		SDGs not examined.
Specific SDGs examined by the VNR	This refers to the specific SDGs examined in the VNR report.	All 17 SDGs.
		List the specific SDGs examined.
		No specific goal-by-goal analysis but rather analysis based on people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnership.
		No specific goal-by-goal analysis but rather analysis based on country priorities.
Detailed analysis	This refers to the level of detail in which the VNR report examines the SDGs.	Detailed examination of all or most of the goals, targets and indicators mentioned in the report.
		Summary of examination of goals, targets and indicators provided with limited details.
		No detailed examination or summary of the goals, targets and indicators mentioned in the report.

Sub-component	Description	Options
Economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development	The extent to which the VNR report addresses all three dimensions of sustainable development – economic, social and environmental – in the report.	Equal attention to economic, social and environmental dimensions.
		All dimensions addressed but a greater focus on economic.
		All dimensions addressed but a greater focus on social.
		All dimensions addressed but a greater focus on environmental.
		All dimensions addressed but limited focus on social.
		All dimensions addressed but limited focus on economic.
		All dimensions addressed but limited focus on environmental.
		Only social dimensions addressed.
		Only economic dimensions addressed.
		Only environmental dimensions addressed.
Integration in SDG implementation	The extent to which the analysis of specific SDGs in the VNR report reflects the integrated nature of the agenda.	Reference to applicable linkages between economic, social and environmental dimensions in analysis of specific goals, targets and indicators.
		Limited reference to linkages between economic, social and environmental dimensions in analysis of goals, targets and indicators.
		No mention of linkages between economic, social and environmental dimensions in analysis of goals, targets and indicators.
		No detailed analysis of specific goals, targets and indicators.
Reference to policy coherence for sustainable development	Whether the report refers to policy coherence for sustainable development.	Yes.
		No
Assessment of domestic and foreign policies on SDG outcomes	Whether the report includes a systematic assessment of how domestic and foreign policies impact the realization of the SDGs in-country and globally.	Assessment of domestic and foreign policies on the realization of SDGs globally.
		Assessment of domestic policies on the realization of SDGs globally.
		Assessment of foreign policies on the realization of SDG globally.
		No assessment of domestic or foreign policies on the realization of SDGs globally.
The overall approach to policy coherence to sustainable development	Reviewer summary of how PCSD is understood. If PCSD is not mentioned, but the report covers related issues, indicate what they are.	Provide direct text from the VNR report or, if longer than 200 words, provide a summary.
		Not articulated in the VNR report.

Sub-component	Description	Options
Linkages to climate change and the Paris Agreement	Whether the report links SDG implementation to climate change and delivering on the Paris Agreement.	Climate change and the Paris Agreement explicitly linked to the SDGs.
		Climate change referenced but no mention of the Paris Agreement.
		No mention of climate change or the Paris Agreement.
Tackling climate change	How the report links climate change and the Paris Agreement to the SDGs.	Provide direct text from the VNR report or, if longer than 200 words, provide a summary.
		Not articulated in the VNR report.
Linkages to the Convention on Biological Diversity	Whether the report links SDG implementation to the Convention on Biological Diversity.	Yes.
		No.
Linkages to the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction	Whether the report links SDG implementation to the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.	Yes.
		No.
Linkages to the Addis Ababa Action Agenda	Whether the report links SDG implementation to the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.	Yes.
		No.
Linkages to Aid Effectiveness and Development Effectiveness Agendas	Whether the report links to the Rome, Paris or Accra agreements on aid effectiveness or the Busan, Mexico and Nairobi agreements on development effectiveness.	Yes; Include which agreements are referenced in notes.
		No.
Linkages to COVID-19 commitments*	Whether the report refers to participation in or commitments to specific COVID-19 initiative such as ACT Alliance.	Yes; Include which agreements are referenced in notes.
		No.
Leave no one behind		
Data to leave no one behind	Availability of data and baselines to ensure no one is left behind.	Additional data required to leave no one behind.
		Efforts to leave no one behind informed by existing baselines/available data.
		Not articulated in the VNR report.
Gender disaggregated data to leave no one behind	The extent to which the report includes gender-disaggregated data where relevant. Use the notes section to provide context for selection and indicate if efforts are being made to improve the availability of gender disaggregated data.	Gender disaggregated data is not available or rarely available
		Gender disaggregated data is available most of the time
		Gender disaggregated data is consistently available throughout the VNR report
		The status of available gender-disaggregated data is unclear from the report
		Not articulated in the VNR report.

Sub-component	Description	Options
Targets of efforts to leave no one behind	Groups within society mentioned by the VNR report that will be targeted in efforts to leave no one behind.	Provide list of groups mentioned by the VNR report (e.g. Indigenous Peoples, women, people with disabilities, etc.).
		Not articulated in the VNR report.
Approaches to targeting those left behind	Type of programmes/approaches adopted to leave no one behind. List all that apply.	Existing specialized programmes for specific groups.
		New specialized programmes for specific groups.
		Universal programmes such as social assistance.
		Not articulated in the VNR report.
Efforts to leave no one behind	Indicate whether the county has adopted an overarching approach to translate the commitment into guidance for policy, targets, goals, etc.	
Efforts to reduce the impacts of COVID-19 on those at risk of being left behind*	Any special efforts noted in the report in relation to COVID-19.	
Efforts to leave no children behind	Efforts specifically targeted to this group as outlined in the VNR report.	
Efforts to leave no Indigenous Peoples behind	Efforts specifically targeted to this group as outlined in the VNR report.	
Efforts to leave no persons with disabilities behind	Efforts specifically targeted to this group as outlined in the VNR report.	Two options for all sub-components:
Efforts to leave no migrants/refugees behind	Efforts specifically targeted to this group as outlined in the VNR report.	• Provide direct text from the VNR report or, if longer than 200 words, provide a summary.
Efforts to leave no people in poverty behind	Efforts specifically targeted to this group as outlined in the VNR report.	• Not articulated in VNR report.
Efforts to leave no ethnic group behind	Efforts specifically targeted to this group as outlined in the VNR report.	
Efforts to leave no one behind - other groups	Efforts specifically geared towards any other group not captured by the categories above, as outlined in the VNR report.	
Realizing gender equality	Efforts specifically geared towards realizing gender equality as outlined in the VNR report.	
Reducing domestic inequalities	Efforts specifically geared towards reducing domestic inequalities as outlined in the VNR report.	
Results of efforts to leave no one behind	The results of efforts to leave no one behind as outlined in the report.	

Sub-component	Description	Options
Raising awareness and creating ownership of SDGs		
Awareness-raising efforts carried out by the government	Whether the government took efforts, including working in partnership with others, to raise awareness about the SDGs at the country level.	Yes; Include what efforts were taken in the notes section.
		No.
		Not articulated in the VNR report.
Nationalization of the SDG agenda at country	Does the VNR report indicate that the country has identified national priorities within the context of the SDGs?	National priorities selected.
		No national priorities selected.
Preparation of national targets and indicators	Has the country defined its own national targets and indicators?	Yes; Indicate whether the report states that the national targets and indicators are aligned to the global targets and indicators and/or if the country has developed proxy indicators for the global indicators.
		No.
		National targets only; Indicate whether the report states that the national targets are aligned to the global targets.
		National indicators only; Indicate whether the report states that the national indicators are aligned to the global indicators and/or if the country has developed proxy indicators for the global indicators.
		Unclear from the VNR report.
National priorities under the SDGs	List the national priorities identified under the SDGs.	Provide direct text from the VNR report if longer than 200 words, provide a summary.
		Not articulated in the VNR report.
Localization of the SDG agenda at country level	The extent to which the VNR report outlines how the SDGs are being implemented at the local level.	Provide direct text from the VNR report or, if longer than 200 words, provide a summary.
		Not articulated in the VNR report.
Stakeholder engagement		
Process for stakeholder engagement	Whether a process for engagement has been set up and what it entails. This is beyond engagement in official governing mechanisms - e.g. youth councils, annual forum, online portal for partners, annual consultations, etc.	Provide direct text from the VNR or, if longer than 200 words, provide a summary.
		Not articulated in VNR report.
Consultation on SDG priorities	Articulation of how non-state actors were involved in the defining of national priorities under the SDGs.	Non-state actors engaged in identification of national priorities.
		Non-state actors were not engaged in the identification of national priorities.
		The VNR report does not set out national priorities.
		Not articulated in the VNR report.

Sub-component	Description	Options
Engagement in the development of VNR reports	Whether non-state actors were engaged in the development of the VNR report.	Yes; Indicate how (part of drafting team, provided a chapter, provided an annex, etc.).
		No.
		Unclear from the VNR report.
Civil society report	Does a civil society parallel report (report prepared for the HLPF or report prepared on the country's progress on the SDGs not linked to the HLPF) exist?	Yes; Indicate report author and provide a link.
		No.
COVID-19 impact on stakeholder engagement*	Does the VNR report indicate how COVID-19 has impacted stakeholder engagement in 2030 Agenda implementation broadly?	Provide direct text from the VNR report or, if longer than 200 words, provide a summary.
		Not articulated in VNR report.
Implementing the 2030 Agenda		
Best practices as identified by the country	The Secretary-General guidelines for the VNR report invite countries to outline 2-3 best practices.	
Lessons learned in accelerating implementation	The Secretary-General guidelines for the VNR report invite countries to outline 2-3 lessons learned in accelerating the implementation of the SDGs.	
Challenges in implementing Agenda 2030	The Secretary-General guidelines for the VNR report invite countries to outline 2-3 challenges they face in implementing the SDGs. Include special note of information related to COVID-19 beyond regular challenges.	Two options for all sub-components:
Learning from peers	Areas in which the country would like to learn from others, as identified in the VNR report.	• Provide direct text from the VNR report or, if longer than 200 words, provide a summary. • Not articulated in VNR report.
Technology	Whether the report refers to technology in the discussion of the means of implementation and/or goal analysis. Include a description of the country's efforts and gaps as well as support by development partners (or support given if examining a high-income country).	
Capacity development	Whether the report refers to capacity development in the discussion of the means of implementation and/or goal analysis. Include a description of the country's own efforts and gaps as well as support by development partners (or support given if examining a high-income country).	
Systemic issues	Whether the report refers to systemic issues. Include issues related to global macro-economic stability (e.g. impact of global crises on country), respect for policy space, and other systemic issues mentioned by the country (e.g. global peace and security concerns are sometimes listed as impacting overall sustainable development progress).	

Sub-component	Description	Options
Budgeting for Agenda 2030 at country level	Whether the VNR report indicates that the SDGs have been incorporated into the national budget.	Yes; Provide direct text from the VNR report.
		No.
		Not articulated in the VNR.
Budgeting for Agenda 2030 at country level	Whether the VNR report indicates that the SDGs have been incorporated into the national budget.	Yes; Provide direct text from the VNR report.
		No.
		Not articulated in the VNR.
Reference to financing Agenda 2030 at country level	Whether the report references, financing needs to realize the 2030 Agenda at the country level and how efforts will be funded. Include in notes section description of efforts (domestic resource mobilization, etc.)	Country-level implementation has been costed and the country has identified sources of finance.
		Country-level implementation has been costed but sources of finance are not identified.
		Costing for country-level implementation not mentioned but sources of finance identified.
		Costing for country-level implementation is planned and no sources of finance have been identified.
		Costing for country-level implementation is planned and sources of finance have been identified.
		Not articulated in the VNR report.
International public finance	Whether the report refers to international public finance (official development assistance, South-South and Triangular Cooperation) in the discussion of the means of implementation and/or goal analysis. Include a description of the country's own efforts as well as support by development partners (or support given if examining a high-income country). For SSC providers, this should include support they receive as well as the support they provide (or their views on these issues).	Two options for all sub-components: • Provide direct text from the VNR report or, if longer than 200 words, provide a summary. • Not articulated in VNR report.
Trade	Whether the report refers to trade in the discussion of the means of implementation and/or goal analysis. Include a description of the country's own efforts as well as support by development partners (or support given if examining a high-income country).	
COVID-19 response*	Whether the report refers to the overall approach to COVID-19 and recovery under the means of implementation and/or goal analysis. Include a description of the country's own efforts, expectations for international community, private sector, etc. and anything you deem relevant in terms of the narrative presented in the approach.	Provide direct text from the VNR report or if longer than 200 words, provide a summary.
		Not articulated in the VNR report.

Sub-component	Description	Options
Partnership to realize the SDGs		
Local non-state actor participation in the implementation.	Whether non-state actors are engaged in the implementation of the SDGs.	Yes; Indicate generic information on how broadly.
		No.
Parliamentarians	Articulation of *how and which* parliamentarians are involved in the implementation of the SDGs beyond participation in consultations, governance or institutional mechanisms. The report must articulate specific activities or actions.	
Civil society	Articulation of *how and which* national civil society actors are involved in the implementation of the SDGs beyond participation in consultations, governance or institutional mechanisms. The report must articulate specific activities or actions.	
Private sector	Articulation of *how and which* national private sector actors are involved in the implementation of the SDGs beyond participation in consultations, governance or institutional mechanisms. The report must articulate specific activities or actions.	Two options for all sub-components:
Academia/experts	Articulation of *how and which* national academia or experts are involved in the implementation of the SDGs beyond participation in consultations, governance or institutional mechanisms. The report must articulate specific activities or actions.	• Provide direct text from the VNR report or, if longer than 200 words, provide a summary. • Not specifically mentioned regarding multi-stakeholder implementation efforts in the VNR report.
Multi-stakeholder implementation of the SDGs – children and youth*	Articulation of *how and which* children and youth are involved in the implementation of the SDGs beyond participation in consultations, governance or institutional mechanisms. The report must articulate specific activities or actions.	
Multi-stakeholder implementation of the SDGs – other	Articulation of how and which other national actors not belonging to the stakeholder groups of civil society, the private sector, parliament or academia/experts, are involved in the implementation of the SDGs beyond participation in consultations, governance or institutional mechanisms. The report must articulate specific activities or actions. E.g. volunteers, Indigenous Peoples, other actors.	
Priority areas for development partner support	Key areas in which the government requires additional support to realize the SDGs. This should be the 'what' or 'priority goals' for help, whereas the role of development partners below looks at how – technical assistance, capacity development, etc.	Provide direct text from the VNR report or, if longer than 200 words, provide a summary.
		Not articulated in the VNR report.
		If not applicable (high-income country), state Not applicable.

Sub-component	Description	Options
The role of development partners	Type of support required from development partners, as indicated in the VNR report. This refers to the 'how' of the support provided- i.e. what is being asked for (technical assistance, capacity development, etc.), whereas priority areas above are about the policy goals/areas for support.	Provide direct text from the VNR report or, if longer than 200 words, provide a summary.
		Not articulated in the VNR report.
		If not applicable (high-income country), state Not applicable.
Support provided to the government to carry out the VNR	Meant to provide some indication of country capacity to participate in the VNR process.	Provide direct text from the VNR report if longer than 200 words, provide a summary.
		Not articulated in the VNR report.
		If not applicable (high-income country), state Not applicable.
Measurement and reporting		
Data availability	Description of the percentage of SDG indicators for which data is available (existing indicators and proxy indicators combined), based on what is reported in the report.	0%
		1-10%
		11-20%
		21-30%
		31-40%
		41-50%
		51-60%
		61-70%
		71-80%
		81-90%
		91-100%
		Unclear from the VNR report.
		Not articulated in the VNR report.
Availability of disaggregated data	Description of the availability of disaggregated data.	Provide direct text from the VNR report or, if longer than 200 words, provide a summary.
		Not articulated in the VNR report.
Efforts to improve data availability	Description of how the government plans to improve the availability of good quality data for SDG monitoring.	Provide direct text from the VNR report or, if longer than 200 words, provide a summary.
		Not articulated in the VNR report.
Inclusion of unofficial data*	Did the report make use of citizen-generated data, big data, private sector data, or any other source of unofficial data.	Yes; Indicate which kind in notes.
		No.
National reporting on the SDGs	How the government plans to report on the SDGs. Includes national reporting systems, parliamentary engagement, how non-state actors are expected to be engaged, etc.	Provide direct text from the VNR report or, if longer than 200 words, provide a summary.
		Not articulated in the VNR report.

Sub-component	Description	Options
Presentation of progress since the last VNR report	Whether the country presented progress since a previous VNR report in some way.	Yes.
		No.
		Not applicable.
Approach to repeat VNR reporting	Description of how the country reported on progress (for example, use of traffic light system, through their statistical annex, description of progress made since last VNR, verification of completion of 'next steps' as identified in first VNR, etc.)	Provide direct text from the VNR as needed and include a summary description of the approach taken.
		Not applicable.
COVID-19 reporting *	How did the report include reporting on COVID-19?	Integrated throughout the VNR report.
		Standalone chapter.
		Addendum or included in HoSG statement.
		No significant reference to COVID-19 beyond casual mention.
Secretary General's voluntary common reporting guidelines		
Opening statement	An opening statement by the Head of State or Government, a Minister or other high-ranking Government official. It can highlight the current status of SDG progress and how the Government is responding to the transformative nature of the 2030 Agenda.	
Highlights (previously Executive Summary)	One to two pages highlighting: review process, the status of SDG progress, how government is responding to the integrated nature of the SDGs and leave no one behind, examples of good practice, lessons learned, key challenges to learn from others, and where support needed.	
Introduction	The context and objectives of the review, relevant country context to the 2030 Agenda, national review cycle, and if existing national reports were used. Could outline policy architecture for 3 dimensions and policy tools for integration, as well as links to other policy frameworks.	Three options for all components: • The report addresses this component, as instructed in the guidelines. • The report addresses this component to some extent in this or another section of the report but does not fulfil the brief as laid out in the guidelines. • The report does not address this component.
Methodology for review	This section may discuss the process of preparation for the national review and how the principles on follow-up and review from the 2030 Agenda were used. Should outline who was engaged and how.	
Creating ownership	Policy and Enabling Environment, Creating ownership of the SDGs. Refers to efforts made towards all stakeholders to inform them of and involve them in the SDGs.	
Incorporation in national frameworks	Policy and Enabling Environment, Incorporation of the SDGs in the national framework. Refers to critical initiatives that the country has undertaken to adapt the SDGs and targets to its national circumstances, and to advance their implementation. Encouraged to refer to legislation, policies, etc. and main challenges in implementing. It can also refer to local governments.	

Sub-component	Description	Options
Integration of three dimensions	Policy and Enabling Environment, Integration of the three dimensions. This refers to how the three dimensions of sustainable development are being integrated and how sustainable development policies are being designed and implemented to reflect such integration.	
Leaving no one behind	Policy and Enabling Environment, Leaving no one behind. Provides assessment of how the principle of leave no one behind is mainstreamed in implementation, including identification of vulnerable groups, data issues, and policies and programmes. Special attention is paid to the efforts of women and girls.	
Institutional mechanisms	Policy and Enabling Environment, Institutional mechanisms. Refers to how the country has adapted its institutional framework to implement the 2030 Agenda. It can include information on institutions and non-state actors, coordination, review plans.	
Structural issues	Policy and Enabling Environment, Structural issues. Refers to relevant structural issues or barriers, including possible external consequences of domestic policies. It can highlight transformative approaches to address barriers.	
Goals and targets	Provides brief information on progress and the status of all SDGs, including critical issues and how they are being addressed and data provided in the statistical annex. Indicate whether a baseline has been defined. Encouraged to review all but some could be done in greater depth. Goal review could include gaps, challenges, successes, lessons learned, actions to be taken and can look at agreed global indicators and targets but also their national and regional ones. For those doing a second review, it is desirable to show progress since the first review.	Three options for all components: • The report addresses this component, as instructed in the guidelines. • The report addresses this component to some extent in this or another section of the report but does not fulfil the brief as laid out in the guidelines. • The report does not address this component.
Means of implementation	Description of how means of implementation are mobilized, what difficulties this process faces, and what additional resources are needed based on the review of challenges and trends. It can indicate how financial systems and resource allocation are aligned with realizing the 2030 agenda and cover their technology and capacity development needs, including for data. Contributions of multi-stakeholder partnerships.	
Conclusion and next steps	Outline what steps are planned to enhance the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. It can also outline review plans for national and sub-national levels, including dissemination. It can highlight lessons learned from the review process, plans to apply them, and support needed for future reviews.	
Annexes	An annex with data, using the global SDG indicators as a starting point and adding priority national/regional indicators and identifying gaps. It can also use additional annexes to showcase best practice and comments from stakeholders on the report.	

ANNEX 3. COUNTRY PROFILES

The review provides an aggregate analysis of the key findings for the 47 VNR reporting countries in 2020. The information presented in this annex summarizes key information from the VNR reports into two-to-three pages, following the pillars of analysis of the review. The country profiles necessarily provide only a summary of where countries stand vis-à-vis the pillars. The information presented is selective and used to illustrate, as much as possible, the overall state of 2030 Agenda implementation as outlined in the VNR reports, as well as best practice case studies. Where available, country profiles include civil society validity check statements, which have been used selectively to indicate instances where information diverges between government and civil society reports.

ARGENTINA

In 2020, Argentina submitted its second voluntary national review (VNR) report to the United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. The first was introduced in 2017.

GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS

Leadership, governance and institutions

The National Council for the Coordination of Social Policies under the president's office, created in 2002 to lead the national Millennium Development Goal implementation, was appointed the leading institution for Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) implementation and localization at the national level. The VNR report does not describe how stakeholders are involved in the 2030 Agenda implementation governance mechanism though it notes the council receives inputs from non-state actors and joins local governments' implementation efforts, providing technical support and capacity building to local governments.

Stakeholder engagement

The VNR does not include information on stakeholder engagement beyond consultations organized by national ministries. Representatives of the private sector, civil society, academia, local governments and the United Nations system in the country were part of the consultative process. The report notes that non-state actors were engaged in the VNR. They contributed inputs to the process and sent texts that were included in the VNR report as boxes.

POLICIES

Baseline or gap analysis

A survey on the availability of SDGs indicators was carried out. Although significant information gaps have been found, no progress has yet been made in measuring the existing gaps. The report neither explains how gaps were identified nor includes information on how they affect the national capacities to monitoring SDGs progress. The VNR report mentions that

'significant information gaps' have arisen from the survey of available data.

Incorporating the SDGs

Argentina has no national development plan. The SDGs are aligned with the government priorities: end hunger and reducing inequalities. After the country's first VNR presentation, Argentina linked the SDGs and their indicators to government priorities and the public budgetary expenditure. The leave no one behind (LNOB) principle is incorporated as a cross-cutting reference across the text with a strong focus on human rights. While the VNR report does not mention planetary boundaries, it does consider a number of boundaries such as climate change, stratospheric ozone depletion, biodiversity loss, freshwater consumption and the global hydrological cycle, among others.

Nationalizing the 2030 Agenda

The 2020 VNR report shows a change in national priorities compared to the previous report. In 2017, the main emphasis was on fighting poverty. The second VNR report identifies ending hunger and reducing inequalities as government priorities. It also underlines that the COVID-19 pandemic has imposed new and urgent priorities linked to providing essential services to people in situations of social and economic vulnerability. According to the VNR report, national SDG targets and indicators have been set. National indicators are mainly 'proxy' in nature, aimed to complement the global ones or adapt them to the national context.

Integration and policy coherence

The VNR report examines all 17 SDGs and addresses the three dimensions of sustainable development, emphasizing social elements. Linkages between social, economic and environmental dimensions are weak in the analysis of each goal and there is no reference to policy coherence. The VNR report explicitly references the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, the Convention

on Biological Diversity and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction as part of SDG implementation. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda is not mentioned nor does the VNR report refer to international commitments related to battling the COVID-19 pandemic. Nevertheless, the VNR report included information on the impacts and challenges that result from the COVID-19 pandemic throughout.

(2030) IMPLEMENTING THE 2030 AGENDA

Leave no one behind
LNOB is consistently considered across the report though the groups at risk of being left behind are not explicitly identified. Nevertheless, the VNR report mentions older people, unemployed, women and girls, women heads of households with children, persons with disabilities, LGBT people, migrants and indigenous peoples as vulnerable groups. The VNR report explicitly notes that the COVID-19 pandemic response requires immediate action, starting from the most vulnerable. Universal and focalized policies have been launched to support vulnerable groups, including conditional cash transfers.

Awareness raising and localization
There are many references in the report to awareness-raising activities, including a series of audiovisual and didactic resources to bring the SDGs to schools and training workshops for local governments, universities and local non-governmental organizations. The National Council for Social Policies Coordination invited Argentinean's provinces to report progress in local SDGs implementation. In 2018, at the provincial governments' initiative, a Federal SDG Network was established to promote local authorities' peer learning. A manual for localizing the SDGs targeting municipalities was also published.

Partnership to realize the SDGs
Civil society organizations, the private sector, academia, local actors and the legislative and judiciary powers have developed activities to implement the SDGs nationally. For example, the Global Compact Argentinean chapter carried out a work to identify contributions to the SDGs by companies. As a result, a catalog of the private sector good practices was published. The Library of National Congress incorporated the SDGs into its Quality Management System in 2019. Multi-stakeholder partnerships are considered as critical to reaching the SDGs. The approach to partnerships focuses on national stakeholders and does not refer to priority areas for external development partners' support.

Means of implementation
The report refers only to capacity development and public finance (nation and international) as a means of implementation. Some reference to technology can be found in the analysis of SDG 9 on industry, innovation, and infrastructure. Elements linked to systemic issues, such as external debt levels and world economic deterioration, are considered about the COVID-19 pandemic. Many specific measures taken to confront the spread of the virus are listed, such as increasing in the items for school and community eateries, granting of an extraordinary bonus for social plans beneficiaries, reinforcing unemployment insurance, setting maximum prices for basic food, paying an exceptional Emergency Family Income, providing soft loans to small and medium-sized enterprises, freezing rental fees, suspending evictions and financially supporting the national production of supplies, equipment and sanitary technology.

Measurement and reporting
Argentina has adopted 34 of 43 international targets. While disaggregated data is consistently found in the analysis of each SDG, the VNR report highlights efforts to increase its availability. To that end, the National Institute for Statistics and Censuses, with the support of the Inter-American Development Bank and the Financial Fund for the Development of the La Plata Basin Countries, adopted a 2017-2020 Work Program aimed at strengthening national statistical capacities. The VNR report does not mention any further reporting steps to be taken.

ARMENIA

In 2020, Armenia submitted its second voluntary national review (VNR) report to the United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF). Its first presentation was in 2018.

GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS

Leadership, governance and institutions

The 2018 VNR report refers to the establishment of a National Council of Sustainable Development in 2002. It is led by the Prime Minister and includes representatives from both government and civil society. According to the 2020 VNR, another council was created in 2015 under the name of Council on the Sustainable Development Goals. This was established to ensure broad public participation in decision-making processes related to the national development programs and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and operates under the leadership of the Prime Minister. According to the 2018 VNR report, an SDG Innovation Lab had been established with support from the United Nations to accelerate SDGs implementation by testing innovations, including in partnership with the private sector. The 2020 VNR report also mentions such initiative and suggests an enhancement in the participation of non-state actors. In 2020, following the Prime Minister's approval of the new composition and rules of procedure of the new Council on the SDGs, several stakeholders, such as non-governmental and international organizations, representatives of trade unions and business associations, and scientific and educational institutions, can participate in the Council's activities.

Stakeholder engagement

While the 2018 VNR report did not cover overarching processes for stakeholder engagement, the 2020 VNR report mentions that non-state actors were involved in the definition of the Mega Goals, under Armenia's Transformation Strategy 2020-2050. According to this second VNR report, Armenia's strategy towards transformation is unprecedented in terms of inclusivity, and has received approval from stakeholders that included businesses and civil society. Apart from being engaged in the definition of national priorities, non-state actors were also engaged in the development of the VNR report itself. Due to the safety measures imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other stakeholders were able to send proposals and success cases online to be included in the VNR report.

POLICIES

Baseline or gap analysis

According to the 2020 VNR report, Armenia did not conduct an overarching baseline study for the 5Ps (*People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace, Partnerships*), but some gap analysis was done for specific SDGs. The 2018 VNR report had examined data availability, including disaggregated data, and had found that indicators were either missing, had an insufficient level of detail, or were not sufficiently aligned with relevant SDGs indicators. However, the 2020 VNR report does not inform about the level of data availability, including disaggregated data.

Incorporating the SDGs

Armenia was in the process of designing an overarching development strategy that would draw on the SDG framework, according to the 2018 VNR report. In turn, the 2020 VNR report shows that the SDGs have been incorporated into national development plans and related policies and frameworks. The VNR report also adds that a roadmap is currently in implementation stage, and that it comprises processes for reforms in areas relevant to the 2030 Agenda through a framework of SDG-aligned targets and indicators. In terms of the 2030 Agenda's principles, the VNR report refers only to the principle of universality, but it does not mention the principles of human rights-based approach, leaving

no one behind, inter-generational responsibilities or planetary boundaries.

Nationalizing the 2030 Agenda

Different from the 2018 VNR report, national SDG priorities have been selected for the 2020 VNR. This second report puts a focus on the People component of the 5Ps and on SDG 16 (Peace, justice and strong institutions). Such priorities include the development of policy and mechanisms for transfer of intellectual potential, knowledge and skills of Armenian diaspora – understood as important elements for the country's economic and social modernization –, reforms related to anti-corruption, judicial and legal issues, human rights protection strategies, among others.

Integration and policy coherence

The VNR report covers all 17 SDGs and mentions both targets and indicators. As in the 2018 VNR report, the 2020 one provides a detailed examination of the goals with equal attention to economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development and provides linkages between the three dimensions as relevant. The VNR report does not refer to policy coherence for sustainable development nor to several international agreements, such as the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, for example. However, the VNR report does refer to the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

GOOD PRACTICE SPOTLIGHT

Armenia's VNR report covers SDG 14 (Life below water), which is not a customary practice for landlocked countries. Although this SDG is not subject to nationalization, the VNR report highlights that Armenia pays special attention to the management of fish resources, the preservation of fish species, the combat against illegal fishing, and that the country had allocated budget to care for the resources of a lake and its basin.

IMPLEMENTING THE 2030 AGENDA

Leave no one behind

The 2020 VNR report does not include a chapter on leaving no one behind, although the goal-by-goal analysis suggests that children, women, people with disabilities, people in poverty, migrants and refugees are at the greatest risk of being left behind. The VNR report refers to universal programs such as social assistance and to new specialized programs aiming at specific groups. With regards to the impacts of COVID-19, Armenia launched a number of actions to provide assistance to people who lost their jobs, and to support workers and special groups, in particular those considered to be the most vulnerable ones.

Awareness raising and localization

The 2020 VNR report does not refer to awareness-raising efforts carried out by the government towards the creation of ownership of the SDGs. With regards to localization efforts, the VNR report is unclear on the role of local governments, as it was the case in the 2018 VNR report.

Partnership to realize the SDGs

While the 2018 VNR report did not provide details on specific actions being undertaken by public and private actors, the 2020 VNR report mentions multi-stakeholder implementation of the SDGs. Civil society, businesses, academics, children and youth are referred to as carrying out specific programs and actions to realize the SDGs. For example, one state university has established an education and science center dedicated to sustainable development, and adolescent girls and boys and communities have been taking action on climate change through initiatives in line with the SDGs.

Means of implementation

According to the VNR report, the key challenges facing the country for SDGs implementation include judicial reforms, anti-discrimination legislative mechanisms, processes aimed at climate change mitigation, and the socio-economic challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. On the other hand, practices of SDGs implementation are mentioned, particularly in terms of technology, capacity development, and trade. In terms of budget, the VNR report refers to an increase in social spending and allocations for human capital

development, but does not mention costing for country level implementation of the SDGs. With regards to international public finance, the VNR report states that the foreign direct investment (FDI) rate is important for the country to overcome poverty, create jobs, and ensure sustainable economic growth.

Measurement and reporting

The VNR report indicates that data collection is one of the most difficult aspects of conducting the VNR process. In order to improve data availability, data from different sources – such as data from the business community, civil society and other non-government stakeholders – have been collected and analyzed. In spite of the awareness of lack of data, the VNR report does not specify actions being carried out to improve data availability. In terms of national reporting on the SDGs, Armenia's Statistical Committee launched a tool called National Reporting Platform (NRP) for SDGs indicators, which aims to disseminate and communicate national statistics and related information to the global SDGs indicators and progress. Although this action is carried out by the government, there is no specific mention to parliament or to non-state actors. In relation to the 2018 VNR report, the 2020 one compares current data and data from previous years, including targets and indicators, and highlights progress being made.

AUSTRIA

In 2020, Austria submitted its first voluntary national review (VNR) report to the United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS

Leadership, governance and institutions

The Austrian Council of Ministers established an Inter-Ministerial Task Force, under the joint chairmanship of the Federal Chancellery and the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs, as the leader body in SDGs implementation and follow-up. Non-state actors' engagement takes place on a ministry by ministry basis, opening to each ministry the decision to work with stakeholders. The VNR shows that the dialogue between state and non-state actors such as civil society, the private sector, academia, local governments, and the parliament is permanent.

Austria's participation in the European Union activities to support the 2030 Agenda implementation is repeatedly highlighted across the VNR.

Stakeholder engagement

An Inter-Ministerial Working Group on the 2030 Agenda focuses on general coordination and dialogue between the government and relevant stakeholders. Regarding the VNR building process, Austria opted for a broad multi-stakeholder approach: over 40 organizations were involved from the beginning in all phases of the review compilation, contributing to set the process design, timelines, and review structure. The VNR draft underwent four consultation rounds, in which 320 responses were collected, playing "a key role in strengthening dialogue, networking and cooperation between state and non-state actors for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda." (p. 13).

POLICIES

Baseline or gap analysis

Even when the report does not articulate a gap analysis or baseline study while analyzing targets, it explicitly indicates that the last year in which data is available in this VNR constitutes a measurement baseline. Two main gaps are underlined, namely the gender pay gap and the income gap between the national population by quartiles. References to existing data gaps are part of the report, even when they are not explicitly stated.

Incorporating the SDGs

The government reported that the SDGs are currently anchored in nationwide strategy documents, such as the Climate and Energy Strategy #mission2030, the Three-Year Programme on Austrian Development Policy 2019-2021, the Austrian Federal Guidelines for Building Culture. The Austrian Youth Strategy incorporates the SDGs via the European Youth Goals.

The VNR report refers to the principle of leaving no one behind. While it includes a strong focus on human rights, it does not refer to a human rights-based approach. Universality, Inter-generational responsibility, and planetary boundaries are not mentioned, though the report pays attention to environmental challenges, particularly climate change.

Nationalizing the 2030 Agenda

The country has established three national priorities for the SDGs: Promote digitalization; women, youth, and 'leaving no one behind,' and climate action and adaptation to climate change. National targets were set, such as reaching a tertiary rate for at least 38% of 30- to 34-year-old. Since 2017, Statistics Austria has produced national indicator tables every year, closely aligned with the UN framework for monitoring the SDGs, complemented by national and regional indicators. The Austrian Federal States also refer to the SDGs in their strategy documents like the 'Climate and Energy Strategy Salzburg 2050' and the 'Smart City Wien Framework Strategy 2019-2050.'

Integration and policy coherence

The report examines all 17 SDGs, providing summary

information on its targets and indicators, and addressing the three dimensions of sustainable development in a balanced manner, even if linkages between them in the analysis of each goal is weak.

Policy coherence is addressed regarding internal policies, stakeholder engagement, and international cooperation provided by the country. However, the report is limited in terms of linking the SDGs to other connected international frameworks and agreements, referring only to the Paris Agreement. Similarly, links between the SDGs and the post-pandemic recovery are not explicitly considered.

(2030) IMPLEMENTING THE 2030 AGENDA

Leave no one behind
LNOB is a VNR cross-cutting issue, integrated into education, women empowerment, health, and access to technology policies and frameworks, among others. The Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care, and Consumer Protection has created a 'Leaving no one behind' dialogue forum.

Persons with disabilities, older persons, young people and children, single-parent families, the long-term unemployed, and people from migrant backgrounds are identified as vulnerable groups requiring focused support. Efforts to leave no women, children, persons with disabilities, refugees, people in poverty, and youth behind, channeled through existing and new specialized programs for those groups and universal social assistance are informed.

Awareness raising and localization
The report identifies awareness-raising actions at different territorial levels: The Inter-Ministerial Task Force website (www.sdg.gv.at) is considered the central platform for the Federal Government's information activities related to the 2030 Agenda. The Lower Austrian project '17&wir' (17&we) increases awareness of the SDGs in that Federal State and awarded with the Austrian SDG prize by the independent business organization Senat der Wirtschaft. For Upper Austrian municipalities, 'GemeindeNavi Agenda 2030' raises awareness about the 2030 Agenda in cities and regions. Awareness-raising is also anchored in the education curriculum. Several SDG-related events are described, including creating the Austrian Sustainability Reporting

Award (ASRA), given annually to honor Austrian companies' top sustainability reports.

Partnership to realize the SDGs
The VNR shows broad participation of non-state actors, such as civil society organizations, the private sector, academia, local actors, and the legislative and judiciary powers at all levels.

The Austrian Parliament is committed to implementing the 2030 Agenda nationally and internationally, promoting a Parliamentary North-South Dialogue. Civil Society is deeply involved in SDGs implementation, and the platform 'SDG Watch Austria' is one of the largest in Europe. The private sector participates mainly through corporate social responsibility actions. The national chapter of the Global Compact was established an award to companies that display special dedication in their commitment to the SDGs. Moreover, as a leading platform for responsible business practices, the Austrian Business Council for Sustainable Development shares SDGs' knowledge with its member companies. UniNEtZ, an inter-university cooperation project in which 16 Austrian universities participate, strengthens cooperation among universities and establishes sustainability topics in research, teaching, student initiatives, management, and public administration. This project is based on an SDG mapping study done in 2017-2018 identifying university publications, courses, research papers, and projects relevant to the SDGs.

Finally, a musical entitled 'Solve It!' was created by 20 youth ambassadors. The musical acquainted about 5,000 young people with all the SDGs creatively, making an essential contribution to raising youth awareness of sustainability.

Means of implementation
The report refers to technology, focusing on digitalization development, capacity development, systemic issues, trade, and national and international 2030 Agenda financing. The VNR report highlights that the SDGs are already used for some of the budget decisions at the federal and state levels, and existing measures such as gender budgeting offer important SDG budgeting links. However, the report does not refer to national SDGs implementation costing. The report underlines the Federal State of Lower Austria initiative in subjecting its subsidies to a sustainability check to develop further

state subsidies aligned with the SDGs. The national COVID-19 response measures are not linked to the SDGs' implementation.

Measurement and reporting

Austria developed a set of around 200 national indicators for the 2030 Agenda, to be further optimized with particular attention to areas requiring improvement. National data is available for 83 % of the specified UN indicators. The report does not incorporate unofficial data. Instead, the almost unique data source is the Annual National Indicator Report of Statistics Austria.

Regarding national reporting, the VNR informs that the Federal Government will regularly inform parliament about the progress being made in implementing the SDGs. Improvement in SDGs implementation will continue to be assessed periodically at the national and EU levels based on indicators.

BANGLADESH

In 2020, Bangladesh submitted its second voluntary national review (VNR) report to the United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF). Its first presentation was in 2017.

GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS

Leadership, governance and institutions

Both the 2017 VNR report and the 2020 one refer to the establishment of an Inter-ministerial SDGs Implementation and Monitoring Committee under the leadership of a Principal Coordinator (SDG Affairs), a high-level position created at the Prime Minister's Office. While Bangladesh's first VNR report made no mention of formal inclusion of non-state actors in the committee, the country's second report mentions that an SDGs Working Team has been formed under the leadership of the Director-General, Governance Innovation Unit of the Prime Minister's Office. Such working team counts with members from the government, academia, civil society organizations (CSOs) and private sector representatives. The team provides recommendations to the SDGs Implementation and Review' Committee.

Stakeholder engagement

Apart from the engagement of several stakeholders in governance mechanisms and institutions, the 2020 VNR report does not refer to overarching processes of engagement. However, it does refer to a 'whole of society' approach for implementation and attainment of the SDGs, although it does not detail how such approach is carried out in practical terms. On the other hand, consultations on the SDGs implementation have been held with representatives from non-governmental organizations (NGOs), civil society organizations (CSOs), businesses, development partners, ethnic minorities, women's networks, among others. The VNR report is not clear as to if national stakeholders have been involved in defining national priorities on the SDGs. For the VNR process, the VNR report notes that meetings and workshops were carried out with different stakeholders, who submitted goal-wise progress reports. Moreover,

the members of the 'SDGs Working Team', represented by government officials and non-government think tanks and academia, prepared Bangladesh's initial draft of the national VNR report.

POLICIES

Baseline or gap analysis

The VNR report indicates that an assessment was carried out for all SDGs. This SDGs data gap analysis revealed that 155 indicators data are currently available. In addition, in the goal-by-goal analysis, each one of the SDGs analysis is followed by a section on challenges and one on the way forward. Such sections also bring information on specific gaps.

Incorporating the SDGs

As stated in the 2017 VNR report, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) priorities are reflected in the country's medium-term development plan, the Seventh Five Year Plan (2016-2020). Adding to this information, the 2020 VNR report includes that Bangladesh's ministries and divisions – in collaboration with United Nations agencies working in the country – have prepared and SDGs Action Plan, which highlights new projects to be implemented to achieve SDGs targets. In addition, the government has adopted Vision 2041, a continuation of Vision 2021, which seeks to take Bangladesh into the path of development. Such actions show that the country has both incorporated the SDGs into national development plans and related policies and frameworks and has made use of a national SDG implementation strategy. On the other hand, only two of the 2030 Agenda's principles – leave no one behind and inter-generational responsibility – have been included in the VNR report.

Nationalizing the 2030 Agenda

National priorities have been selected, and national targets and indicators have been prepared in accordance with the 17 SDGs. The priorities and indicators have been defined as "39+1", in which one additional priority indicator (the "+1") refers to achieving the leaving no one behind principle in accordance with local/district-specific circumstances.

Integration and policy coherence

The VNR report examines all 17 SDGs, with equal attention to economic, social and environmental dimensions, and making references to applicable linkages between dimensions in the goal-by-goal analysis. Different from the 2017 VNR report, the 2020 one refers to policy coherence, which is included in a sub-chapter. It states that the government has created committees to ensure internal coordination in different levels and to create synergies in policy making across economic, social and environmental aspects. Although the VNR report makes reference to climate change, there is no mention of the Paris Agreement. On the other hand, there are linkages to the Convention on Biological Diversity and to the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

GOOD PRACTICE SPOTLIGHT

Bangladesh has identified an extensive array of persons as at risk of being left behind. Marginalized groups and vulnerable populations include transgender persons, persons with specific professions (e.g. tea gardeners, cleaners, domestic aides), Bede (gypsies), beggars and street children, people living in specific areas (e.g. char areas, people living in hilly regions), special needs children, neonate, adolescent girls and boys, HIV/AIDS affected people, people suffering from infectious diseases, people suffering from mental disorders, drug-addicted youths, people injured by road traffic accidents, persons with disabilities, children who have been dropped out from schools, youth not in education, employment or training, female students prone to violence, ethnic communities, and any other marginalized persons and communities.

IMPLEMENTING THE 2030 AGENDA

Leave no one behind

Different from Bangladesh's first VNR report, in the 2020 one efforts to leave no one behind (LNOB) have been informed by existing baselines and available data. The VNR report recognizes the importance of the voice of vulnerable groups to be heard and of their specific needs to be addressed in targeted policies and programs. Indeed, efforts to LNOB regard universal programs such as social assistance, new and existing specialized programs for specific groups. Among Bangladesh's progresses to LNOB, the VNR report includes the decrease of the population living below the national poverty line, the improvement in access to education for boys and girls, and a dominant leadership of women in both parliament and government.

Awareness raising and localization

According to the VNR report, the government has been engaging the media into SDGs implementation in Bangladesh, which has been translated into awareness creation campaigns through electronic and print media. Moreover, a policy decision has been made to include the SDGs in schools' curricula. As for localization efforts, Members of Parliament have been transmitting the core messages of the SDGs to the local level so that the goals are integrated in local development initiatives. As stated by the VNR report, awareness programs have been carried out through workshops at the divisions and district levels. According to the VNR report, there is an expectation that the local level will tailor targets and action plans to implement the SDGs in their own contexts.

Partnership to realize the SDGs

Bangladesh highlights different initiatives held by diverse stakeholders on SDGs implementation. Apart from actions carried out by the parliament towards localization, civil society, the private sector, academia and development partners have also contributed to

joint efforts. These include actions towards mapping activities and designing implementation plans, improving education, and promoting inclusivity. The VNR report does not mention actions being carried out by children and youth when it comes to multi-stakeholder implementation of the SDGs.

Means of implementation
The VNR report outlines good practices/good cases, innovative cases, business cases and collaborative cases to achieve specific SDGs. Such cases have been presented by different stakeholders and included in the VNR report. The VNR report brings "challenges" sections under each one of the SDGs in the goal-by-goal analysis. In terms of peer learning, Bangladesh outlines areas in which knowledge sharing from other countries might be useful to solve internal challenges that include sustainability in rapidly growing urban areas, agricultural productivity, affordable quality education, and mitigation of climate change effects. With regards to budgeting, the annual average cost of SDGs would

be US$ 66.32 billion (at constant prices) between the 2017 and 2030 fiscal years. The country has identified public and private sources of finance and partnerships, external funding, and sources from non-governmental organizations. Moreover, the VNR report mentions South-South and Triangular Cooperation as playing an important role in development.

Measurement and reporting
After the results of the SDGs data gap analysis, the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics was bestowed with providing data for 105 out of the 155 indicators of the SDGs. The VNRs report notes an improvement in the availability of metadata against SDGs indicators. Although the 2017 VNR report made no mention of plans for national reporting, since 2018, a monitoring and evaluation framework has been put in place and is constantly revised to set targets and indicators of SDGs from the current moment (benchmark) to the envisioned objective in 2030. The VNR report has a standalone chapter on COVID-19 reporting.

BARBADOS

In 2020, Barbados submitted only main messages to the United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF). This was the country's first report the HLPF.

GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS

Leadership, governance and institutions
Barbados did not include information on national governance arrangements for 2030 Agenda implementation in the main messages.

Stakeholder engagement
The main messages did not include information on stakeholder engagement.

POLICIES

Baseline or gap analysis
There are no references to baselines or gaps affecting the national progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) achievement in the main messages.

Incorporating the SDGs
In 2018, the government began implementing the Barbados Economic Recovery and Transformation Plan to restore macroeconomic stability and place the economy on a path of sustainable and inclusive growth while safeguarding the financial and social sectors. According to the main messages, the plan reflects the government's alignment of its anti-poverty and sectoral strategies with the SDGs, particularly in fiscal policy.

Nationalizing the 2030 Agenda
The main messages point to nine national goals including:

1. Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all and increase access to economic resources and basic services and reduce vulnerability to disaster and climate crisis (SDG 1. No poverty);
2. Reduce mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention and treatment Improve health

coverage (SDG 3. Good Health and well-being);
3. Increase youth and adult access to technical skills for employment, decent jobs, and entrepreneurship (SDG 4. Quality Education);
4. Increase water-use efficiency and reduce water scarcity (SDG 6. Clean water and sanitation);
5. Increase the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix (SDG 7. Affordable and clean energy);
6. Promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products (SDG 8. Decent work and economic growth);
7. Adopt fiscal, wage and social protection policies that progressively achieve greater equality (SDG 10. Reduced inequalities);
8. Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters (SDG 13. Climate action); and
9. Global coordination to partner with developing countries in attaining long-term debt sustainability through debt financing, debt relief and debt restructuring, as appropriate, and address the external debt of highly indebted developing countries to reduce debt distress (SDG 17. Partnerships for the goals).

Integration and policy coherence
The main messages do not include information on progress regarding each goal.

IMPLEMENTING THE 2030 AGENDA

Leave no one behind
The main messages do not provide an overview of specific vulnerable groups though notes Barbados' vulnerability as a country. It highlights that small, vulnerable, highly indebted, tourism-dependent states like Barbados are among the hardest hit by the pandemic, given that for tourism-dependent Caribbean

islands over 45% contribution of their GDP comes from tourism on average. Tourism also accounts for a similar proportion of employment. Barbados' National Insurance Scheme, a national social security program, received over 35,000 unemployment applications as of May 2020, representing a quarter of the national workforce. A fiscal adjustment and structural reform program design in partnership with the International Monetary Fund considered the most vulnerable groups' risks during the reform process though no details are provided on how in the main messages.

Awareness raising and localization

The main messages make no mention of awareness-raising or SDGs localization efforts carried by the country.

Partnership to realize the SDGs

Barbados highlights in its document that Goal 17 (Partnership for the goals) is now more relevant than ever, as the world battles a global pandemic, with countries' having varying levels of access to the critical resources needed in this fight.

Means of implementation

Based on the Barbados Economic Recovery and Transformation Plan, the country signed an Extended Fund Facility with the International Monetary Fund in October 2018. Together, these two documents lay out fiscal adjustment and structural reform measures, pursued to shift the burden of structural adjustment away from labor and the most vulnerable towards capital and the visitor economy. A thriving domestic and external debt restructuring allowed the Barbados government to increase national expenditures in health, education and social protection, leading to improvements in key social and economic indicators. The main messages do not provide data on these improvements. However, they do point to challenges in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and note that the COVID-19 pandemic calls on the global community to reprioritize and reorganize expenditure, global supply chains and economic structures. In Barbados, responding to the COVID-19 challenge is affecting SDGs implementation.

Measurement and reporting

There are no references to measurement and reporting in the main messages.

BENIN

In 2020, Benin submitted its third voluntary national review (VNR) report to the United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. Its previous presentations took place in 2017 and 2018.

GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS

Leadership, governance and institutions

The coordination and monitoring-evaluation mechanism was established in 2017, composed of five bodies: 1) the steering committee headed by the Minister of State in charge of Planning and Development; 2) the technical steering committee; 3) the joint government-municipality coordination framework on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); 4) the consultation framework for civil society organizations (CSOs) on the SDGs; and 5) the Research and Study Group on Sustainable Development.

The Steering Committee is mandated to examine SDG implementation at the national level and at the level of sectoral ministries, lobby for resource mobilization, instruct the Technical Steering Committee to take into account the SDGs in sectoral strategies and policies and to report periodically on their implementation. It is composed of members of the government as well as technical and financial partners and representatives from the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the National Employers' Council, the Council of Private Investors of Benin, civil society, trade union, the National Association of Municipalities of Benin, the Women's Federations, the Associations of Persons with Disabilities, and the Youth Parliament. The Technical Steering Committee is composed of all technical and operational executives representing the administration/government as well as Technical and Financial Partners, civil society and private sector organizations including chambers and business representatives.

Stakeholder engagement

Regarding stakeholder engagement, the VNR report highlighted measures including the law on public-private partnership, CSO consultation framework and round tables and forums organized to engage other stakeholders such as private sectors and philanthropic foundations. The framework for consultation of civil society organizations is structured around four thematic groups (social, economy, environment and governance) and promote the participation of civil society in the implementation of the SDGs, especially at the community level. The framework constitutes a space for multi-stakeholder dialogue to inform and share lessons learned in the operationalization and monitoring-evaluation of the SDGs. In addition, as part of efforts to ensure wide ownership over the SDGs, the Ministry of Planning and Development will organize, every six months, reviews on the implementation of the priority SDG targets for Benin. These reviews will serve as an opportunity for all stakeholders to outline their flagship actions carried out, the difficulties encountered and the prospects for achieving the country's priority targets by 2030.

According to the VNR report, COVID-19 did not significantly impact processes for stakeholder engagement in the VNR drafting process, as measures were taken to move discussions online or in small groups respecting safety measures. The VNR report notes that four hundred different actors were involved in the VNR process through the launch of a methodological workshop and then through more than fifty working sessions. These actors included ministers, presidents of institutions, deputies, representatives of United Nations agencies, technical and financial partners, the National Association of Municipalities of Benin, Employers, civil society actors, trade union centers, religious groups and youth organizations.

POLICIES

Baseline or gap analysis

The VNR report includes a discussion of evolutions and trends since Benin's last report in 2018 for all SDGs.

It also outlines measures taken by the government to reverse negative trends. In terms of gaps and trends, the average trend of the indicators for most SDGs is stagnant. The percentage of people accessing social services did not increase since last reporting 24.3% in 2018 against 25.4% in 2014. Malnutrition in children under five years of age is stagnating. SDG 13 however, saw moderately improved trends. The VNR report includes a useful mapping that allows for easy visualization of the gaps identified and progress towards the achievement of targets according to particular indicators.

Incorporating the SDGs

The SDGs have been integrated into the 2018-2025 National Development Plan and its first operationalization tool, the Growth Programme for Sustainable Development. The VNR report refers to the principles of universality and leaving no one behind as part of the 2030 Agenda.

Nationalizing the 2030 Agenda

National priorities are identified, among others, in the following areas: economy, environment, governance, means of implementation, health and social outcomes, reducing inequalities and access to water and energy. Benin's approach to nationalizing the 2030 Agenda led to the selection of 164 indicators (based on 80 global indicators defined by the United Nations) to monitor Benin's package of 49 priority targets.

Integration and policy coherence

The VNR report provides equal attention to economic, social, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. Policy coherence is specifically put forward as part of the country's approach to leave no one behind (LNOB) through a special funding initiative called "Ne laisser personne de côté." This initiative takes into account, among the 49 priority targets, those whose implementation will have the greatest impact on the population to LNOB. This initiative also represents an instrument for framing SDGs implementation policies over the next 10 years. To foster the incorporation of the SDGs in national planning frameworks, the government plans to draw up a guide to facilitate the integration and/or alignment of development policies and programs at national, sectoral and communal levels with the United Nations 2030 and African Union 2063 agendas. Using a scoring method, planning documents will be assessed in

terms of the degree to which the priority targets of the two agendas have been considered. The VNR report does not mention major international agreements, however efforts are taken towards mitigating the impact of climate change through the adoption of legal and policy instruments at the national and local level.

(2030) IMPLEMENTING THE 2030 AGENDA

Leave no one behind

Benin identifies women and girls, children, people in poverty and people with disabilities as those that are at risk of being left behind. In addition to the special funding initiative noted above, efforts to LNOB include an insurance package for strengthening human capital adopted in 2018 that offers beneficiaries an integrated package of health insurance, credit, training for actors in the informal sector and pension insurance for actors in the uncovered informal sector. Other efforts aim to accelerate the demographic dividend through the empowerment of women. The VNR report also highlights initiatives to improve access to water and energy. Efforts to LNOB are informed by existing official and unofficial data.

Awareness raising and localization

With regards to local implementation, the VNR report highlights a participatory and inclusive approach to apply the country's prioritized targets in its 77 communes. This exercise led to the identification of ten priority targets for each of the country's communes accompanied by standards for action derived from national level efforts. The government-municipality coordination is composed of the Mayors of the 77 municipalities in the country and members of the government. Through this coordination framework, a technical commission has been set up within the National Association of Municipalities of Benin. This commission meets quarterly and provides a place for exchange where the mayors and the National Coordination of SDGs study the SDG process in the municipalities and assess communal dynamics. No specific activities were mentioned in this report on raising awareness, although, the government plans to raise awareness through reporting processes including reviews of SDG targets and through the consultation framework with CSOs.

mobilized for sectoral interventions. The VNR report highlights innovative financing as a means to address challenges related the financing of priority action targets selected during the localization exercise and support the country's special SDG funding initiative on LNOB. The report also highlights technology (information and communication technology as well as digitization) as a key driver for SDG implementation and to LNOB. Implementation challenges include ensuring synergy in the actions of all actors, monitoring and evaluation system capacities and the mobilization of financial, technical, and human resources.

To mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, a support initiative for the productive sector is being put in place evaluated at 74.12 billion FCFA. It includes measures in favour of formal enterprises, artisans and small-scale service in the informal sector and for vulnerable people. The government plans to establish a program to subsidize the poor and extreme poor once they have been identified.

Partnership to realize the SDGs

The VNR report refers to the role of non-state actors in implementation, notably through the processes of stakeholder engagement outlined above. In addition, the VNR report notes that youth are mainly involved in the implementation of the SDGs through volunteer programmes. With the support of the United Nations Volunteers Programme and the United Nations Development Programme, the country has set up the National Corps of Young Volunteers for Development. Volunteers have been deployed across vital sectors including education, health, community development and support to local communities.

Means of implementation

Benin has included the SDGs as part of budgeting processes through a program approach that supports the preparation of the state budget. This approach allows for a better understanding of the budgetary resources

Measurement and reporting

Data disaggregation is consistently available throughout the VNR report and a new strategy was adopted in April 2020 to improve, among other, the level of data disaggregation. The strategy is supported by a task force dedicated to improving national and sectoral statistical approaches and mechanisms to produce quality, disaggregated data. The data used for the VNR report comes largely from an extensive literature review, supplemented by data collected from SDGs focal points ministries, civil society organizations and local authorities.

The General Directorate for Coordination and Monitoring of the SDGs reports to the country's Steering Committee. At the end of each year, it prepares a report that assesses the implementation of the priority SDG targets in Benin. As noted above, the government is also organizing regular multi-stakeholder reviews of progress to ensure wide national ownership.

BRUNEI DARUSSALAM

In 2020, Brunei Darussalam submitted its first voluntary national review (VNR) report to the United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF).

GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS

Leadership, governance and institutions

Since 2016, Brunei Darussalam has been using a multi-stakeholder Special Committee for the Implementation of the SDGs. According to the VNR report, the committee aims to facilitate the inclusion of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) indicators in the country's development plans, ensure and monitor SDGs implementation in tandem with national priorities. Multiple cabinet ministers oversee the country's progress towards the achievement of the SDGs, and the private sector, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), researchers and academia are mentioned as part of the committee for SDGs implementation.

Stakeholder engagement

Apart from the inclusion of non-state actors in the government-led coordination mechanism for the implementation of the SDGs, the VNR report does not indicate that a broader mechanism for stakeholder engagement has been established. In the preparation of the VNR, the government conducted direct consultations with different stakeholders, including NGOs and academia, and organized a VNR workshop to provide opportunity for meaningful participation in the preparation of the VNR report.

POLICIES

Incorporating the SDGs

According to the VNR report, the SDGs have been incorporated into national development plans and related policies and frameworks through Wawasan Brunei 2035, the vision that guides Brunei Darussalam's development strategies and policies. While the VNR report does not mention the human rights-based

approach, it makes reference to human rights principles. Universality and planetary boundaries are not explicitly referenced. On the other hand, the VNR report does not contain a dedicated section on leave no one behind (LNOB), but mentions the principle throughout.

Nationalizing the 2030 Agenda

According to the VNR report, Brunei Darussalam's national plan aims for the country to have high levels of education and a dynamic and sustainable economy by 2035. However, these national priorities are not related in detail to the SDGs, and the establishment of national targets and indicators is unclear in the VNR report.

Integration and policy coherence

The VNR report covers all the SDGs and mentions targets and indicators. All the three dimensions of sustainable development are addressed, though with a greater focus on economic, and there is no mention of linkages between economic, social and environmental dimensions. The VNR report makes no reference to policy coherence for sustainable development approaches and does not mention some international agreements, including the ones related to COVID-19. However, it does refer to the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

IMPLEMENTING THE 2030 AGENDA

Leave no one behind

Although there is no dedicated chapter to leave no one behind (LNOB), the VNR report suggests that children, persons with disabilities, elderly, women, ethnic groups, migrants, refugees, the poor and the needy are considered more at risk of being left behind. Approaches to targeting such main vulnerable groups refer mainly to

universal programs such as social assistance. The VNR report mentions the important role played by volunteers during the COVID-19 pandemic and the month of Ramadhan into assisting the public and frontliners, and into helping to distribute food rations to families in need.

Awareness raising and localization

In the goal-by-goal analysis, the VNR report brings some examples of awareness raising efforts that relate to specific SDGs – for example, the promotion of Braille and sign language courses while raising awareness on the challenges faced by persons with disabilities is mentioned under SDG 10 (Reduced inequalities). In addition, an awareness campaign named MyActionForSDGs was carried out to inspire individuals, organizations and the local community to take action towards the achievement of the SDGs. This action was supported by United Nations agencies and aimed to, among others, raise awareness and localize community action supporting the SDGs. Although the VNR report mentions local non-state actors such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs), entrepreneurs, businesses and communities, it is less clear about the role played by local governments in performing activities around the SDGs.

Partnership to realize the SDGs

The VNR report mentions local non-state actor participation in SDG implementation. Parliamentarians, civil society, the private sector, academia, children and youth are referred to as being carrying out specific actions. Some examples also include the engagement between civil society organizations and youth, between the private sector and universities. Initiatives include youth-produced development projects, sustainable development-focused training for university students and staff, and the development of an online portal to provide e-learning opportunities for women.

Means of implementation

The VNR report highlights the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic as a challenge to the progress of SDG implementation. It also identifies areas for learning from other countries' experiences in their implementation of the SDGs, mentioning that the government welcomes continued collaboration, including technical assistance and capacity building programs to strengthen the country's human resources and infrastructures. Technology and trade are aspects mentioned in the VNR report when it comes to means of implementation. With regards to actions taken to tackle COVID-19, the VNR report includes measures carried out under SDG 3 (Good health and well-being) and SDG 8 (Decent work and economic growth). On the other hand, there is no reference to budgeting or financing for the 2030 Agenda at the country level.

Measurement and reporting

The VNR report does not inform how the SDGs process has been reported at the national level. Moreover, there is no explicit reference to data availability or disaggregated data. Although the VNR report refers to the intention to further identify gaps in and availability of its SDGs data, as well as to strengthen the country's monitoring and reporting progress mechanisms, no current efforts are clearly mentioned towards this objective. Although the VNR report does not explicitly mention the use of unofficial data, some numbers have been informed by non-state actors, such as, for example, the number of food and education packs collected by different NGOs to be sent to specific groups and countries.
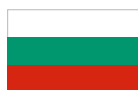
BULGARIA

In 2020, Bulgaria submitted its first voluntary national review (VNR) report to the United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS

Leadership, governance and institutions

In 2016, shortly after the 2030 Agenda adoption, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs mapped the public institutions' responsibilities for the respective SDGs, targets, and indicators related to them. As a result, a detailed indicative table on ministries and institutions' responsibilities for meeting the SDGs in Bulgaria has been developed, and each responsible ministry outlined sectoral policies and related strategies, concepts, plans, and reports to implement the goals at the national level. The leadership of this process was set under the Ministry of Finance. Non-state actors are not included in official SDG implementation governing structures, and each ministry decides how to work with stakeholders in its area.

Stakeholder engagement

Even when the VNR includes a chapter entitled "Stakeholder engagement," no explanation of its engagement mechanisms is provided, and no reference to consultation with national stakeholders on SDG priorities is part of the report.

Conversely, precise information is provided on stakeholders' engagement in the VNR building process. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has taken action to collect relevant information from stakeholders on policies and activities related to the SDGs implementation: a wide range of stakeholders was consulted through an online survey of non-governmental organizations, and trade union representatives were interviewed. The review also includes the results of an online survey of Bulgarian Youth Delegates to the UN on young people's priorities.

POLICIES

Baseline or gap analysis

The government did not carry out a gap analysis or baseline study. Still, the report includes identifying gaps and areas where further efforts are needed to achieve the SDGs among the 'Next Steps' to be taken. Nevertheless, the VNR includes mentions of gender equity gaps, specifically to the gender pay gap, as critical problems faced by the country.

Incorporating the SDGs

The report notes that the SDGs have been integrated into the National Development Program Bulgaria 2030, a strategic framework document establishing the vision and the overall goals of development policies in all state governance sectors, including their territorial dimensions. Moreover, policies and principles laid down in the 2017-2021 Government's Programme for the Republic of Bulgaria are in line with the 2030 Agenda.

A complete VNR chapter analyzes efforts made by the country to LNOB, which is also considered all along with the report. Although the VNR lacks a human rights-based approach, references to Human Rights could be repeatedly found as part of the document. Nevertheless, the report does not consider universality, inter-generational responsibilities, nor planetary environmental boundaries.

Bulgaria's participation in the European Union effort towards the SDGs achievement is a report cross-cutting issue.

Nationalizing the 2030 Agenda

The country has established three national priorities for the SDGs: Promote digitalization; women, youth, and 'leaving no one behind,' and climate action and adaptation to climate change. National targets were set, such as reaching a tertiary rate for at least 38% of 30- to 34-year-old. Since 2017, Statistics Austria has produced national indicator tables every year, closely aligned with the UN framework for monitoring the SDGs, complemented by national and regional indicators. The Austrian Federal States also refer to the SDGs in

their strategy documents like the 'Climate and Energy Strategy Salzburg 2050' and the 'Smart City Wien Framework Strategy 2019-2050.'

Integration and policy coherence

The report examines all 17 SDGs, providing detailed information of all of them without including linkages between economic, social, and environmental dimensions as part of each goal analysis. However, the link between the Sustainable Development dimensions is considered in a general way in other sections of the report, supported by an analysis of the interconnections of policies in the economic, social, and environmental aspects of development carried out after Bulgaria acceded to the EU.

In the same line, policy coherence issues are explicitly integrated into the VNR, though only referring to internal policies, stating that 'Policy-making respects the principles of coherence in identifying priorities, objectives, contractors and target groups.'

Nevertheless, the report is consistent in linking SDGs and relevant international documents such as the Paris Agreement, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Paris Declaration, and the Busan Declaration on Development Effectiveness. Efforts towards the 2030 Agenda implementation are also partially linked to COVID-19 national commitments.

(2030) IMPLEMENTING THE 2030 AGENDA

Leave no one behind

The report identifies people with disabilities and chronic diseases, vulnerable citizens, Roma people, young people, people from high mountain areas, the elderly, disadvantaged children, women and girls, drug users, prostitutes, prisoners, migrants and asylum seekers, and people living under the poverty as the key groups in risk of being left behind.

More data is needed for Bulgaria to leave no one behind. Gender disaggregated data is available, but there are data gaps regarding other vulnerable groups. Even when prostitutes are mentioned as a vulnerable group, no reference to policies or programs to support them is reflected in the VNR.

Efforts to leave no one behind are guided by new and existing focused programs, mainly under national strategy frameworks such as the National Strategy for Persons with Disabilities 2016-2020, for Long-Term Care, and the National Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan (2014-2020), among others. Regarding gender equality, a National Council on Equality between Women and Men operates at the Council of Ministers.

Bulgaria also underwent a process of reassessing and redirecting available financial resources to respond to and assist the most vulnerable as part of the EU COVID-19 global humanitarian response.

Awareness raising and localization

The report highlights that 'After the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, Bulgaria has initiated a series of initiatives to raise awareness among citizens, businesses, institutions at all decision-making levels, students, teachers and trainers, media representatives, etc.' (p.12). It also underlines the key role of both the Government and the stakeholders in consistently raise public and Government agencies aware of the 2030 Agenda. However, no details on awareness-raising actions are provided.

The Bulgarian National Association of the Municipalities, which includes all 265 cities, assists in directing public financing to fulfill the SDGs and is represented in multiple Council of Minister's advisory bodies, including the National Council on Social Inclusion, which works toward achieving the principle of leaving no one behind.

Partnership to realize the SDGs

The report shows a high engagement in the non-governmental sector in the SDGs implementation. The most relevant coalitions of non-governmental organizations are the Bulgarian Platform for International Development that brings together 15 organizations-, and the Citizen Participation Forum, -a network of civil society organizations working to increase citizen and NGO involvement in policy formulation and decision making-. Besides, two organizations -Coalition For The Nature, and Bulgaria Climate Coalition- stand out as environmental SDGs implementers.

The primary channel for private sector engagement is the Bulgarian Network of the UN Global Compact, which presented its *Strategic Plan 2015+* prioritizing eight of the SDGs, namely good health and well-being; quality

education; decent work and economic growth; industry, innovation, and infrastructure; sustainable cities and communities; responsible consumption and production; peace, justice and strong institutions; and partnerships for the Goals. In 2020, the progress will be reviewed, and the document will be updated.

Some of the leading Bulgarian Universities and the Institutes at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences contribute to the 2030 Agenda implementation through scientific discussions and research projects. Youth participates through a National Youth Forum, gathering 50 international, national, local, and political youth organizations with the motto "It's time for the youth to take the floor!". Trade Unions also contribute to the 2030 Agenda implementation. Among them, the Federation of Transport Trade Unions is particularly active. Parliamentarians' engagement is not included in the VNR.

Means of implementation

Capacity development, national and international public finance, systemic issues, and technology are considered among the 2030 active means of implementation. The last two are linked to the effort to confront the COVID-19 pandemic impact at the national and international levels, supporting the UN Secretary-General initiative of Build Back Better. Actions to face COVID-19 are considered in a report annex that links sets of measures to meet the pandemics with specific SDGs.

In the field of technology, the priorities are improving energy efficiency, creating ICT development clusters, and Space Research. Regarding Public financing, the public investment increased by nearly 60% in 2018, and the capital expenditure for set out in the 2020-2022 Midterm Budgetary Forecast will increase by 46% compared to the 2016-2018 period. Following a financial decentralization process launched in 2003, the local governments contribute to public services funding. However, budgeting for Agenda 2030 is not articulated in the VNR. Private capital contribution is considered critical. A Law on Public-Private Partnership was updated in 2017, upholding private investment in infrastructure.

Measurement and reporting

Data and disaggregated data needs are not presented in the report, which uses official national data, complemented by other sources, mainly the Eurostat database but also the European Patent Office, the OCDE, and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Secretariat. The data arising from a situational analysis of UNICEF published in 2017 on the state of child protection in Bulgaria is also taken into account in the VNR.

The report makes no mention of national reporting tools or plans.

BURUNDI

In 2020, Burundi submitted its first voluntary national review (VNR) report to the United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS

Leadership, governance and institutions

A National Steering and Coordination Committee chaired by the Minister of Finance, Budget and Development Cooperation was established for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the SDGs. A multi-sectoral technical committee composed by the different sectoral ministries, United Nations agencies, civil society and local elected officials was created in March 2020 and was in charge of the preparation of the VNR.

Stakeholder engagement

The VNR report does not refer to long-term mechanisms of stakeholder engagement. However, with respect to consultations on national priorities, it notes that the process of prioritization of targets saw the participation of all the stakeholders to ensures effective ownership of the SDGs. The VNR process brought together all of Burundi's development actors, namely the Presidency of the Republic, ministries, the National Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, technical and financial partners, communes, private sector associations and civil society organizations (CSOs) including people living with disabilities, young people, academics and religious groups. The VNR included national workshops and regional (local) workshops to ensure that regional dimensions were taken into account to leave no one behind (LNOB). A workshop for the review of the VNR report by specific groups, such as CSOs, academia and the private sector, as well as a national validation workshop on a draft version of the VNR report were held.

POLICIES

Baseline or gap analysis

A gap analysis assessment was carried out for all Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It focused on trends, challenges and opportunities as presented in the VNR report. The assessment considered both available data, policies and programs. The VNR report includes gaps identified across SDGs. For example, on SDG 1 (ending poverty) nearly 2 out of 3 Burundians are unable to meet their basic food and non-food needs on a daily basis. In terms of drinking water coverage (SDG 6), in 2019, the rate of access to drinking water was 83% in urban areas against 60% in rural areas. Overall, the VNR report provides specific information on gaps and progress for all SDGs in the goal-by-goal analysis.

Incorporating the SDGs

SDGs are incorporated through the National Development Plan (2018-2027), in sectoral strategies and in Community Development Plans. The VNR report makes reference to two principles of the 2030 Agenda implementation, including universality and LNOB. It does not refer to intergenerational responsibility or planetary boundaries.

Nationalizing the 2030 Agenda

The ongoing process of national prioritization has gone through three main stages: 1) the prioritization of SDG targets; 2) the mapping of indicators for priority targets; and 3) the harmonious integration of these SDGs into the National Development Plan (2018-2027), the sectoral strategic plans and the Community Development Plans. Given the country's significant youth bulge, the government identified education, child and maternal health, nutrition, social protection, water, hygiene and sanitation and participation as key elements of its long-term development strategy.

Integration and policy coherence

All the three dimensions of sustainable development are addressed in the VNR report through its review of all 17 SDGs however there is a greater focus on the social dimension. Indeed, there is a significant focus on the improvement of the social conditions of children. According to the VNR report, policy coherence is ensured through the National Development Plan, integration of the SDGs in sectoral strategies and efforts to ensure consistency with national priorities (key to national ownership of the SDGs). One institutional mechanism

to ensure policy coherence is the Child Poverty Working Group mandated to ensure that development policies, budgets, legislation, programs, and projects efficiently address children's needs.

The VNR report does not include linkages to the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. It tends to focus more on the environment than climate change per se with reference to reforestation programs (SDG 15), the use of waters (SDG 6), the role of education and awareness raising on climate change (SDG 4), and the sustainable use of natural resources and promotion of renewable energies (SDG 12). In terms of other international agreements, the government plans to pursue continued advocacy for a strong commitment by all stakeholders to the implementation of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.

(2030) IMPLEMENTING THE 2030 AGENDA

Leave no one behind
The VNR report identifies children, women, pregnant women, people with disabilities and older people as at risk of being left behind. Efforts to LNOB include access to health care for the population, especially the most vulnerable, as a priority, in addition to attention to children. On the latter, Burundi mentions that success on the SDGs can only be achieved through investing in policies and programs that target this population. Implementation of the National Health Policy includes a vision to ensure that 90% of the population will be living less than 5 km from a health centre. The country has achieved free access to medical care for pregnant women and children aged 0-5 years and attention on school-aged children has resulted in near parity at the basic school level and a gross enrolment rate of 111% in 2019. The VNR report also outlines specific provisions for people with disabilities and people living in poverty through specific law and policies aimed at protecting and promote their rights, as well as project such as the Merankabandi social safety net support, which aims to provide cash transfers to support poor households.

Awareness raising and localization
The process of prioritization of targets saw the participation of all the stakeholders to ensures effective ownership of the SDGs. No specific activities were mentioned on awareness raising for the overall 2030 Agenda. However, some awareness-raising efforts specific to SDGs were mentioned such as awareness on the importance of sending children to school and on women's rights. On localization, the government has organized technical workshops to support four pilot municipalities in integrating the SDGs into the Community Development Plans.

Partnership to realize the SDGs
The VNR report provides little information on the role of non-state actors outside governance and consultations. Nevertheless, it notes that priority areas for development partner support include resource mobilization to implement policies targeted for children and support towards the implementation of a COVID-19 response plan. The country requires support more generally to reach its priority targets by 2030. Support to carry out the VNR was provided by civil society, technical and financial partners, in particular the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Children's Fund.

Means of implementation
Burundi plans to cost implementation of the 2030 Agenda with expectations that sources of finance will include South-South cooperation and bilateral and multilateral cooperation in addition to domestic resources. Remittances constitute one of the sources of innovative financing for economic development. Trade is also mentioned as a specific measure for financing the SDGs.

To respond to COVID-19, Burundi developed a national contingency plan to prepare and respond to the pandemic in the health sector, estimated to cost over US$ 58 million. Other actions planned include the provision of financial assistance to businesses and assistance to improve financial stability through the construction of a strong financial safety net as well as the preservation of social spending for the most vulnerable. The country expects to extend social protection programs and achieve a gender-sensitive COVID-19 response by ensuring that the risks and needs of girls and women are taken into account in interventions.

Measurement and reporting
The VNR report presents the state of implementation of the SDGs at the end of 2019, which corresponds to almost two years of implementation of the country's National Development Plan for 2018-2027. Data availability is not mentioned overall though data disaggregation is a challenge to LNOB (though some data disaggregation is available in the VNR report). The need to strengthen national statistical capacity is mentioned to increase timely and disaggregated data to better inform decision making processes.

COMOROS

In 2020, Comoros submitted its first voluntary national review (VNR) report to the United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS

Leadership, governance and institutions

A national council, chaired by the Secretary General of Government, is responsible for overseeing, coordinating and validating all 2030 Agenda activities and for resource mobilization. A technical committee, under the direct authority of the Planning Commissioner, is responsible for the monitoring and technical coordination of the VNR. Non-state actors are included in governance arrangements via the national committee. These include five representatives of civil society and five representatives from the private sector.

Stakeholder engagement

In terms of ongoing stakeholder engagement, the steering, monitoring and evaluation mechanism of the country's national development plan, "Le Plan Comoros Émergent," includes the "Major Themes of Dialogue." The dialogue is composed of technical officers from ministries, representatives of technical and financial partners, civil society organizations and the private sector.

Non-state actors were engaged in identification of national priorities. The process included the participation of all the ministers, technical and financial partners, United Nations agencies, parliamentarians, civil society and the private sector. A conference for development partners was organized in December 2019, in Paris, to mobilize the essential resources to accelerate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the country and to present "Le Plan Comoros Émergent" to partners.

The COVID-19 pandemic required the coordination team to adjust the engagement process for the VNR, particularly in terms of data collection, stakeholder consultation and validation of reports. Despite this, Comoros managed to conduct consultation via online conferences, webinars and emails. However, limited access to Internet or quality connection was a challenge for this process.

POLICIES

Baseline or gap analysis

The report includes an analysis of trends for all the SDGs as well as prospects for progress on prioritized targets. The country benefited from United Nations support for the alignment of SDGs with national and sectoral strategies in the framework of the Mainstreaming, Accelerating and Policy Support program. This was preceded by a Rapid Integrated Assessment, alignment of national planning including the Strategy for Accelerated Growth and Sustainable Development and thirteen sector plans and strategies relevant to the SDG targets. The VNR report indicates that the level of alignment of SDGs to the national planning document is calculated at 73.3%.

In addition, the results of the analysis conducted by the Overseas Development Institute, provides scores on the level of progression for the SDGs at country level. This analysis shows trend regression for many SDGs: 1, 9, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16 and 17 while progress is expected for SDG 7, 3, 8. For the targets of the SDG 4, 6 and 12 the trend would remain unchanged. In terms of gaps in progress, a significant proportion of the population still lives below the national poverty line. A large part of the population suffers from a lack of access to basic needs such as water, electricity, health care and an efficient justice system. Food insecurity affects 35% of the population.

Incorporating the SDGs

The SDGs are incorporated into the country's national development plan, "Le Plan Comoros Émergent." Adopted in 2019, the plan represents the reference document for national planning for the 2030 Agenda and the African Union's Agenda 2063. The VNR report references the

principle of leave no one behind (LNOB), with a dedicated chapter but does not refer to the human rights-based approach though there is a strong reference to human rights.

Nationalizing the 2030 Agenda

With the support of the United Nations Development Programme, the country prioritized SDG targets together with public institutions, civil society, the private sector and development partners. National priorities include blue economy, tourism, food security and craftsmanship. The country has developed a system of indicators adapted to national priorities and statistical production capacities for monitoring the implementation of the SDGs. This system integrates indicators proposed by the United Nations and selected at the national level, as well as national indicators that can inform the prioritized targets.

Integration and policy coherence

The VNR report addresses all dimensions of sustainable development but with a greater focus on social aspects. It covers all 17 SDGs and notes that actions on SDG 14 and the blue economy can boost economic and social development that conserves marine and coastal biodiversity. Comoros is a signatory of the Paris agreement and submitted its first national determined contribution in September 2015. A revised version is being submitted in 2020. The report also refers to the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and to a draft law being prepared in view of adopting the Nagoya Protocol of the Convention on Biological Diversity. On policy coherence, the report mentions the alignment of the National Development Plan and the sectoral strategies, plans and programs with the SDGs, as well as the implementation of an inclusive monitoring and evaluation system in order to systematically strengthen the coherence of sustainable development policies.

(2030) IMPLEMENTING THE 2030 AGENDA

Leave no one behind

Comoros identifies women, children and persons with disabilities at risk of being left behind. Since 2014 the country implemented a national policy for inclusive social protection with the objective of making Comoros a nation "where every citizen has sustainable access to the satisfaction of its basic needs through comprehensive and inclusive social protection" through the development of social safety nets, improving access to basic social services, promoting innovative risk management strategies and strengthening the framework for coordination, management and monitoring-evaluation of social protection. A decree to set up a single social register is in the process of being signed to ensure the enrolment of any household living in precarious conditions. Several legal texts aimed at promoting, enforcing and monitoring the application of the principles of gender equality and non-discrimination based on sex are adopted. A poverty survey is currently ongoing allowing the country to have better data, necessary for the effective implementation of SDGs.

Awareness raising and localization

According to the VNR report, the government undertook an intensive process of sensitization and nationalization of the SDGs. An official launch of the implementation of the SDGs was carried out by the national authorities. Information meetings and awareness-raising sessions were organized at the National Assembly and in the communes.

At the local level, the SDGs are being localized through the local development monitoring system. For each island, a Development Steering and Monitoring and Evaluation Committee has been set up under the supervision of the governor who presides over the committee. This process ensures that no one is left behind and promotes the integration of SDGs in future municipal development plans, as well as in the projects of non-governmental organizations and local development associations. The VNR report also highlights the role of village communities in local development. They are at the forefront of many initiatives to facilitate access to water and energy and key actors in the reduction of pressures on ecosystems and natural resources. Village communities participate both materially and financially in interventions to make various services accessible to the population and provide important support to reduce the vulnerabilities of people left behind.

Partnership to realize the SDGs

Non-state actors and civil society more specifically, take an active part in the implementation of several SDG projects and programmes targeting vulnerable groups and in mobilizing communities, particularly young people, in favour of social and environmental causes, such as the fight against violence on women,

social equity, actions against the destruction of forests, protection of watercourse sources, etc. They provide an interface between the most marginal groups and the public programs that are designed to respond to their needs. Most projects carried out by non-governmental organizations and local communities contribute to the achievement of the SDGs targets. Additionally, the mechanisms for implementing the national plan allow all Comorian citizens to make their contributions, individually or collectively, through the different possible levels of intervention: governmental, insular, municipal and non-governmental organizations.

Means of implementation

Capacity development is mentioned as a means of implementation especially in the following areas: improving national statistics, programming and budgeting, capacity building in information technology, adaptive capacity, and resilience to climate change in the agriculture sector. The VNR report mentions South-South cooperation, particularly with the countries of the subregion, as a mean to encourage the sharing of experience and good practices in innovation and sustainable development interventions, as well as in economic exchanges and human capital development. Climate change and its impacts are particularly

mentioned as a big threat for a Small Island Developing State. The country is highly exposed to weather and climate hazards, including floods, cyclones, rising waters and volcanic eruptions. Every year huge economic losses are inflicted on the country. The COVID-19 pandemic will impact a number of economic sectors (tourism, remittances, imports, etc.). It has somewhat disrupted momentum for mobilizing the resources promised during the Development Partner Conference.

Measurement and reporting

Despite data availability for some indicators, it is mentioned that there are gaps in statistical production in terms of quantity, quality, coverage, analysis and diffusion. Efforts to reduce data gaps include the adoption of a National Strategy for the Development of Statistics, implemented with the support of development partners. Thanks to this, the country has been able to carry out major statistical operations, such as the household surveys on poverty, and set up important databases on socio-economic data or a database for development assistance. The authorities are working to set up a data centre. The VNR report does not mention the role of parliament in national follow-up and review processes.

COSTA RICA

In 2020, Costa Rica submitted its second voluntary national review (VNR) report to the United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. The first was introduced in 2017.

GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS

Leadership, governance and institutions

Costa Rica's governance mechanism to implement the 2030 Agenda was introduced in its previous VNR report. A High-Level Council for the 2030 Agenda, headed by the President, is the main institution responsible for Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) implementation. It is supported by an SDGs Consultative Committee that brings together state and non-state actors that have signed the 2016 National Pact for the SDGs Advancement - a framework to promote the 2030 Agenda implementation in Costa Rica. The Ministry of Human Development and Social Inclusion was incorporated as a member of the consultative committee in 2019.

Stakeholder engagement

The VNR report does not provide information on stakeholder engagement in SDGs implementation activities led by the government beyond governance. Based on the previous VNR report, the Consultative Committee is still the government's primary channel for the stakeholder-government dialogue. Nevertheless, to ensure that interested stakeholders could express their perspectives on Costa Rica's progress towards the SDGs, a draft version of the VNR report was publicly shared, and a series of meetings were organized to discuss inputs. Due to COVID-19, meetings were held virtually.

POLICIES

Baseline or gap analysis

An assessment for the 17 SDGs was presented in the previous VNR report. The issue was not addressed in the 2020 report. However, the 2020 VNR report repeatedly mentions information and financial gaps as the main obstacles to advance national SDGs implementation.

Incorporating the SDGs

The National Development and Public Investment Plan of Costa Rica incorporates the SDGs as an axis of its design and implementation. The same is true for the country's National Determined Contributions under the Paris Agreement and the National Decarbonization Plan, among other national policies. The VNR report considers recovery from COVID-19 as a challenge and an opportunity to reinforce the national path towards the SDGs achievement. Accordingly, the VNR considers cross-cutting principles of the 2030 Agenda, including leave no one behind (LNOB) and universality. It also notes a human rights approach though does not reference intergenerational responsibility or planetary boundaries (though the VNR report does cover issues like loss of biosphere integrity, ozone layer depletion, oceans acidification, etc.).

Nationalizing the 2030 Agenda

Costa Rica's national priorities and its national indicators were introduced in the 2017 VNR report. They are not analyzed in the 2020 VNR report. Rather, the report emphasizes solving the COVID-19 emergency and providing health care for patients as the country's current main priorities.

Integration and policy coherence

The VNR report addresses all three dimensions of sustainable development in a balanced manner. However, it only provides a short analysis of each of the 17 SDGs that barely includes references to linkages between economic, social and environmental issues. No reference to policy coherence is integrated into the VNR report though the document does refer to the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. The VNR report presents information on the impacts and challenges that result from the COVID-19 pandemic in a stand-alone chapter and across the report.

IMPLEMENTING THE 2030 AGENDA

2030

Leave no one behind

The VNR report includes efforts to LNOB that appear to be informed by available data for specific groups, namely women, children and youth, elderly, indigenous and afro descendants, people with disabilities and migrants. To support those groups at risk, Costa Rica combines universal and focused programs. The basis for these efforts lies in binding protection norms adopted by the Parliament, like the National Action Plan adopted in 2020 that focuses on prevention and eradication of violence against children and youth strategy. Given the COVID-19 impacts in society, the Government also kickstarted specific policies to support the most affected groups, such as the launch of a 'Protect Bonus,' a direct transfer to individuals who have had their working hours reduced or suspended, or have lost their jobs.

Awareness raising and localization

According to the VNR report, the Government of Costa Rica carried out activities to raise awareness, including in partnership with academia, to disseminate knowledge on the 2030 Agenda. It also worked with the private sector to develop SDGs sensitization media campaigns. Nevertheless, awareness-rising is included as part of the main national challenges.

In terms of localization, the VNR report highlights the creation of an alliance between the country's local governments and the United Cities and Local Governments Organization to strengthen SDG implementation at the local level. The first product of this alliance was the publication in 2020 of a report about locating the SDGs in Costa Rica's local governments. The coalition continues working though future steps are still to be decided.

Partnership to realize the SDGs

The VNR report stresses local governments, the parliament, the judiciary branch and academic engagement in SDGs implementation efforts. These include examples such as the adoption of a decision by the Superior Council of the Supreme Court of Justice of Costa Rica calling all judicial bodies to consider in their budgets actions to promote the SDGs, attune the task of administering justice with the 2030 Agenda and harmonize the jurisprudence of the Supreme Court and the international instruments of public international law

ratified by Costa Rica with the SDGs. The private sector, civil society and development partners are mentioned in the report only in reference to the COVID-19 national response, a critical issue considering that the VNR report identifies substantial negative impacts of the pandemic on the national progress towards the SDGs in the last five years.

Means of implementation

The VNR report briefly introduced references to good practices across its text, such as the National Policy for the care and prevention of violence against women of all ages (2017-2032). It notes that it is necessary to strengthen cooperation between the government and the United Nations system to address the challenge of accelerating the 2030 Agenda effective implementation. Technology, capacity development and public finance are mentioned as means of implementation. Regarding public finance, an entire subchapter analyses the relevance of the Official Development Assistant new measurement system under development by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, namely the Total Official Support to Sustainable Development (TOSSD), which is considered as a right step towards an improved international cooperation measurement system. The VNR report also mentions that national public investment is the primary tool to fund actions to face the COVID-19 impacts in Costa Rica.

Measurement and reporting

According to the VNR report, as of 2019, Costa Rica national has enough available data to measure 136 out of 244 indicators. This means 55.74% data availability. Lack of sufficient data disaggregation is a challenge. An Action Plan for updating, calculating and defining methodologies for the SDG indicators was included as part of the National Development Plan. With respect to the country's first VNR report, the 2020 VNR report provides a narrative of progress for each SDG, noting if it has advanced, stagnated, or regressed since 2017. No specific tool is used to mark progress beyond brief descriptions of the direction of progress. Finally, to disseminate the VNR report, a process to update the national SDGs monitoring website will be carried out, and a non-identified set of the VNR complementary materials will be published and publicly shared. The VNR report does not mention a possible third national report presentation timeframe.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

In 2020, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) submitted its first voluntary national review (VNR) report to the United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS

Leadership, governance and institutions

The Prime Minister is responsible for implementation of the 2030 Agenda in the DRC. Through the Ministry of Planning, the Congo's Observatory for Sustainable Development was established to monitor and evaluate the impact of the implementation of the National Strategic Development Plan and monitor the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the DRC's commitments in relation to the grouping of fragile states (g7+) and the New Deal. An SDG Acceleration Framework under the observatory is envisaged that will include all stakeholders and aim to ensure the achievement of the results of the 2030 Agenda. However, the framework is hindered by the major challenge of resource mobilization.

Stakeholder engagement

The VNR report does not outline ongoing mechanisms for stakeholder engagement outside consultations. Non-state actors including, civil society and technical and financial partners, were involved in the identification of national priorities and in the VNR. This included thematic group workshops, debates and a "Café diplomatique." The latter aimed to involve mainly technical and financial partners. COVID-19 impacted the process for stakeholder engagement and data collection during the VNR although alternative solutions were found to ensure a participatory approach via specialized virtual platforms.

POLICIES

Baseline or gap analysis

The mapping of SDG indicators made it possible to determine a reference level of indicators covered by statistical data. Of the 133 indicators prioritized, 108 are covered by statistical data for an overall coverage rate of 81.2%. These statistical data come from various sources, both national and international. From the assessment carried out for all the SDGs, the VNR report presents information on gaps and regressions in progress across the SDGs examined.

Incorporating the SDGs

The SDGs are incorporated in the National Strategic Development Plan adopted in 2019 by the government, as well as the national and provincial sectoral strategies. In terms of principles for 2030 Agenda implementation, the VNR report refers to the human rights-based approach and leaving no one behind, with a dedicated chapter. It does not refer to planetary boundaries, universality, or intergenerational responsibility, although a light reference to the latter is mentioned with regards to the sustainable management of forest resources to benefit future generations.

Nationalizing the 2030 Agenda

DRC has identified national priorities for 2030 Agenda implementation. The VNR report lists 19 priorities that cover areas related to peace and stabilization, governance, justice and human rights, economic growth, social outcomes, technology, culture, art, youth and sport, gender equality and the environment and sustainable development. National level targets and indicators to support these priorities have been identified and are aligned to the to the global targets and indicators.

Integration and policy coherence

The VNR report provides an examination of all 17 SDGs with a focus on all three dimensions of sustainable development, though less attention to economic dimensions overall. The country ratified the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and committed to reduce by 17% its greenhouse gas emissions by 2030. The VNR report does not mention other major international agreements related to the 2030 Agenda. In terms of

policy coherence for sustainable development the report indicates the need to further collaborate among sectors to plan and execute different activities, as well as the need to discontinue the sectoral approach that has underpinned national policies.

2030 IMPLEMENTING THE 2030 AGENDA

Leave no one behind
The DRC identifies women, children, indigenous people, and persons with disabilities as at risk of being left behind. According to the VNR report, efforts to leave no one behind (LNOB) include free basic education and setting up the process for the universal health coverage. A ministry in charge of people with disabilities has also been established as well as a project for the integration and support of indigenous people. Realising gender equality is a priority for the government with the VNR report pointing to legal reforms and increases in women in the legislature.

On reducing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the government, via the Ministry of Planning, developed a health and socio-economic impact assessment and a multisectoral emergency mitigation program. Estimated at USD 2.3 billion, the program is based on three pillars: 1) response to the COVID-19, surveillance and strengthening of the health system, 2) support for macroeconomic stability and recovery, and 3) risk mitigation and population support.

Awareness raising and localization
The VNR report points to different awareness raising activities such as radio and tv broadcast, conferences, debates, surveys, workshops and meetings with the public. At the provincial level, with the support of both the central government and technical and financial partners, awareness-raising and popularization campaigns have been organized in provincial capitals. The "Sustainable Development Perception Index" measures the effectiveness of public policies implemented to achieve the SDG targets in terms of the perception of the population. It also provides the population with an insight into the state of the SDGs, particularly with regard to development priorities, while also being an opportunity to understand the population's awareness of 2030 Agenda.

Localization efforts are underway at the subnational level through the Provincial Development Plan. The government

developed a tool that enables the diagnosis of development in rural areas to define priorities that should lead to the elaboration of local development plans. This tool also encourages the structuring of communities into Local Development Committees that involve the rural population more in the implementation of SDGs.

GOOD PRACTICE SPOTLIGHT

The "Sustainable Development Perception Index" is an innovative way of engaging and reaching out to the population. It measures the effectiveness of public policies implemented to achieve the SDG targets in terms of the perception of the population. It also provides the population with an insight into the state of SDGs, particularly with regard to development priorities, while also being an opportunity to understand the population's awareness of the 2030 Agenda.

Partnership to realize the SDGs
The VNR report recognizes the roles of non-state actors in implementing the 2030 Agenda. Civil society plays a big role with regards to SDGs implementation, bringing field experience and mobilizing resources and attention around priority targets such as free education. Civil society organizations also produced a study on innovative financing on SDG 4 on education for all. Caritas Congo also conducted a study to measure the degree of alignment of the national budget to the SDGs. While the VNR report highlights a significant role by civil society with regards to implementation, it also mentions other actors including the Congo's business federation, religious groups and technical and financial partners.

Means of implementation
According to the VNR report, country level implementation has been costed and the country has identified sources of finance. The government estimates an average annual minimum cost of USD 31.63 billion for implementation with USD 13.25 billion for the private sector and USD 18.4 billion for the public sector. The

International Monetary Fund estimates the DRC's average annual expenditure requirement as $10.1 billion from 2016 to 2030, or a total of $152 billion over the period. However, this cost does not cover all the SDGs. The VNR report notes the need for a detailed analysis on the means of implementation to define a coherent financing framework. The VNR report points to official development assistance and South-South and triangular cooperation as means of implementation. Investing in technologies, and especially information and communication technologies, is also recognized as a means to increase economic growth and reduce poverty and social exclusion. There is also a need to increase the capacities of actors to implement the 2030 Agenda more broadly.

Measurement and reporting

Notwithstanding the critical situation of the national statistical system, the DRC has relative statistical coverage for the monitoring-evaluation of the implementation of the SDGs with data gaps existing for only 19% of prioritized indicators (corresponding to 25 indicators). Major challenges for monitoring and reporting include: improving the quality of statistical data, increasing funding for the statistical system, improving human capital and disseminating statistical data. Efforts to address these challenges include the use of non-national sources to fill the information gap for indicators that are not supported by the national statistical system, the development of a multi-year program of statistical data collection through a household survey, better engagement with administrative data producers, and significantly increased budgetary resources for the national statistical system.

In terms of VNR reporting, the report was transmitted to the government for political validation following technical validation. For this 2020 VNR report, after the Council of Ministers was held in June 2020, the government adopted and validated the report, subject to consideration of the amendments and recommendations made.

ECUADOR

In 2020, Ecuador submitted its second voluntary national review (VNR) report to the United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. The first was introduced in 2018.

GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS

Leadership, governance and institutions

The national Technical Planning Secretariat 'Planifica Ecuador' and the Republic of Ecuador's Vice Presidency coordinate 2030 Agenda implementation. The governance mechanism outlined in the 2020 report differs from what was presented in 2018. According to the VNR report, civil society, academia, the private sector, parliamentarians and local government participate in technical committees that support 2030 Agenda implementation, however they do not have decision-making capacity.

Stakeholder engagement

Planifica Ecuador led a dialogue with academia, civil society, private companies, cooperation organizations and local governments to promote coordination in the process of building the VNR. However, the report does not provide information on how stakeholder engagement was carried out or on specific outputs. The report does not refer to ongoing processes of stakeholder engagement beyond the provisions outlined above with respect to governance.

POLICIES

Baseline or gap analysis

The VNR report does not include information on baselines or a gap analysis, as was the case in the 2018 VNR report. It does, however, make references to territorial and gender gaps as well as financial and urban-rural gaps (though with limited information on these).

Incorporating the SDGs

The country adopted the 2030 Agenda as a State policy. According to the VNR report, the national priorities established in the National Development Plan 2017-

2021, called 'All a Life,' contribute to the fulfillment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The plan is complemented by a National Territorial Strategy, which allows for implementation of the national policy at the local level. The 2030 Agenda principles of leaving no one behind and inter-generational responsibility are integrated across the VNR report. It also references human rights but without assuming a concrete human rights-based approach. According to the VNR report, the country is integrating COVID-19 impacts into a future National Development Plan. It also calls on the world to rethink the 2030 Agenda considering the effects that the pandemic will have on it.

Nationalizing the 2030 Agenda

The National Development Plan priorities are directly aligned with the SDGs. As outlined in the 2018 VNR report, these include eight priorities pertaining to equal opportunity, interculturality and plurinationality, environmental outcomes, including the rights of nature, sustainable, equitable economic growth, food sovereignty, participation, transparency and co-responsibility and sovereignty and peace. Though the country has not established national SDG indicators, its 2020 VNR report annex includes information on indicators pertaining to Ecuador's National Development Plan goals, identifying its alignment with one or more SDGs.

Integration and policy coherence

The VNR report covers all the 17 SDGs, paying equal attention to the three dimensions of sustainable development though it only provides limited references to linkages between them while analyzing each goal and target. Without making references to policy coherence for development, the VNR report specifically links the SDGs to climate change and the Paris Agreement on climate change, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda is not mentioned, and no specific linkages between SDGs implementation and commitments to global COVID-19 response measures

are set. Nevertheless, the VNR report includes information on the impacts and challenges that result from the COVID-19 pandemic in a stand-alone chapter.

(2030) IMPLEMENTING THE 2030 AGENDA

Leave no one behind

The VNR report does not provide information on data to leave no one behind (LNOB). Even though it is possible to find many references to 'vulnerable groups' in the text, they are not specifically identified. The VNR report mentions women, children and youth, elderly, persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, homeless, poor people and unemployed as groups as vulnerable and presumably as then at risk of been left behind. The primary approach to assist them are universal social policies, such as the Initiative 'House for All' to facilitate access to safe, adequate and dignified housing. Some universal policies include specific references to vulnerable groups. The Organic Law of Intercultural Education guarantees access to education for all children, indicating that people in vulnerable situations should have preferential treatment. Specific measures to attend the neediest in the pandemic context are reported. For example, support domestic and gender violence victims during the quarantine, the National Government implemented a massive information strategy.

Awareness raising and localization

The VNR report does not introduce awareness-raising efforts carried out by the government as was the case in 2018. Regarding localization, a National Territorial Strategy is pointed out as the primary tool to translate national objectives to regional and locally specific contexts and decentralize public action in a coordinated and synergistic way. The VNR report does not provide a full overview of the current status of localization in terms of engagement with local governments beyond policies, capacities, specific implementation programs and partnerships.

Partnership to realize the SDGs

The VNR report provides examples of activities carried out by civil society, the private sector, academia, the parliament. It also includes a general mention of activities carried out by 'the citizenship.' Some examples include a project to improve admission to the higher education system of Ecuador for vulnerable groups members and "Call to action for water" initiative launched by the Business Council for Sustainable Development of Ecuador, aimed to promote production systems reducing water footprint.

Means of implementation

The VNR report briefly introduces good practices across its text, mainly linked to environmental protection and clean energy promotion. Capacity building, technology, international public finance and systemic issues are considered 2030 Agenda means of implementation. The VNR report notes that it is necessary to introduce new technologies to achieve goals in food production and education, strengthening public-private partnerships to achieve a more efficient public finance system and support human talent capacity development. It is also required to articulate global actions to face global challenges, such as climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic. The VNR report does not include references to costing nor budgeting for SDGs implementation.

Measurement and reporting

Ecuador adopted a Statistical Development Plan and is working on the formulation of a diagnosis of its National Statistical System capabilities. According to the VNR report, 72% of the indicators that make up the Statistical Development Plan correspond to Tier I and II categories for global SDG indicators. Nevertheless, the VNR report states that generating higher levels of data disaggregation is a critical issue. The VNR report does not show clearly the progress made in SDGs implementation since the 2018 one. In trying to explain the relationship between the two reports, the 2020 VNR report only makes very general statements such as noting the 2020 VNR report "incorporates several innovations compared to what was reported in 2018" (p.12). The VNR report did not include information on a national SDGs reporting strategy.

ESTONIA

In 2020, Estonia submitted its second voluntary national review (VNR) report to the United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. The first was submitted in 2016.

GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS

Leadership, governance and institutions

An Estonian Coordination Mechanism for Sustainable Development was established, including both ministries and non-governmental organizations. The main governmental body responsible for the SDGs implementation heading that mechanism is the Government Office Strategy Unit.

Almost 20 years before the 2030 Agenda adoption, an Estonian Commission for Sustainable Development was established in 1996 as a Government advisory body, bringing together NGOs' umbrella organizations. The Commission meets 4-5 times a year, organizes thematic discussions on issues raised by its members, and makes policy recommendations.

This scheme is completed by an inter-ministerial working group on sustainable development -integrated by representatives of ministries and Statistics Estonia, and a Coalition for Sustainable Development formed in 2018, an informal cooperation mechanism uniting representatives from NGOs, companies, the Government Office, and some ministries.

Stakeholder engagement

The report informs that a wide range of non-governmental partners provided information to the VNR through the Commission for Sustainable Development and a questionnaire to determine the contribution of stakeholders. However, no stakeholder engagement process is presented, and no reference to consultation with national stakeholders on SDG priorities is made.

POLICIES

Baseline or gap analysis

The first VNR of Estonia, in 2016, stated that a preliminary gap analysis of governments' policies and SDGs was initiated in spring 2016. Nevertheless, its results are not articulated in the second VNR, making no reference to baselines or gaps studies. The only gap clearly identified in the 2020 exercise is the gender gap and, more specifically, the gender pay gap.

Incorporating the SDGs

There is broad evidence of change towards the 2030 Agenda achievement: an SDG strategy adoption; definition of national indicators, targets, and goals; multi-stakeholder engagement in implementation actions; and efforts to increase data availability.

The Regulation of the Government of Estonia on the preparation of strategic development plans stipulates that they must be based on global SDGs. This year's milestone is the completion of Estonia's long-term strategy Estonia 2035, which prides a strong basis for a systematic reflection on SDGs integration in sectoral processes. The SDGs are covered by strategic documents at various levels, including horizontal strategies, like the Estonian competitiveness strategy 'Estonia 2020,' the Government Action Plan 2019–2023, and the Estonian sustainable development strategy 'Sustainable Estonia 21'.

Nationalizing the 2030 Agenda

The report notes four SDGs priorities: Reducing poverty and dealing with related problems, waste prevention and restoration of terrestrial ecosystems, improving public health, and fight against terrorism and violent extremism. In a very innovative approach, an 'SDG 18. Viability of the Estonian cultural space' was established and prioritized nationally:

Also, national targets and indicators were set. In 2018, a report of Estonian Sustainable Development Indicators was completed.

Integration and policy coherence

The report covers all the SDGs, plus the national 'SDG 18. Viability of the Estonian cultural space'. Each goal is detailly examined, including statistical information, activities carried out at the central government level, and non-governmental stakeholders. In some cases, Estonia's international cooperation is also addressed as part of the analysis.

Although links between sustainable development dimensions are not consistently included as part of the goal-by-goal analysis, tending to appear more strongly in SDG 1. No Poverty, and the three "environmental" SDGs, the report has a balanced integration of social, economic, and environmental sustainability.

Domestic and foreign policies on SDGs impacts are assessed in areas such as ICT, green technology, and migration.

It explicitly links the SDGs to the Paris Agreement on climate change, the Convention on Biological Diversity, and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. Nevertheless, the report does not present an articulated approach to policy coherence.

Strangely, there is no reference to COVID-19 in the entire VNR.

(2030) IMPLEMENTING THE 2030 AGENDA

Leave no one behind

The 2020 Estonian VNR does not consider the LNOB in a separate chapter, and it is not a theme constantly present across the report. As a result, it does not articulate issues like data to LNOB, and Gender disaggregated data is rarely available. Regarding the report as a whole, people in poverty, children, women, elderly and persons with disabilities could be seen as groups receiving particular attention in government efforts, such as universal child allowance and the provision of a lump sum benefit to the elderly to reduce its risk of falling into poverty. Women are the group receiving more attention in the VNR. An applied study will be carried out in 2019-2021 to develop and test nudging methods to increase girls' and women's share in ICT specialties in education and the labor market, aimed at reducing gender stereotypical attitudes and

segregation.

A Diverse Workplace label was created in 2016 to reduce inequalities in a broad perspective. Companies that have joined the label aim to promote diversity in their organization in a targeted and thoughtful way.

Awareness raising and localization

Estonia's Government is conducting SDGs raising-awareness actions. As part of the European Sustainable Development Week, Estonia's annual Opinion Festival draws attention to the SDGs. The Government also intends to create a multi-stakeholder platform for sustainable development to share information on sustainable development issues and increase the citizenship sense of responsibility for achieving the 2030 Agenda.

The report includes extensive information on the SDGs' localization. On the one hand, local governments have representatives at the Estonian Commission for Sustainable Development. On the other hand, the Government adopted an impact assessment methodology upon the preparation of legislation, creating a development plan, and approving the Government's position in the EU affairs, requiring to consider its impacts on the local level, among other areas.

The national authorities also cooperate with local Governments in projects like the construction of a water and sewerage system for Estonian households in low-density areas.

Finally, the report informs that an administrative reform was implemented in 2017. As a result, the number of local governments was reduced from 213 to 79, assuming that larger local governments provide higher quality services to citizens and contribute to a more balanced regional development. After the administrative reform, all merged and non-merged local governments are preparing new strategic development documents for directing spatial development on the local Government's territory to make it more sustainable.

Partnership to realize the SDGs

The report does not consider partnerships to implement the SDGs systematically. Civil society, the private sector, academia, and youth actions are included in the VNR, showing that they are doing a broad 2030 Agenda implementation work. The civil society 'Estonian Association of Big Families', for example,

provides food, clothing, and household items to families in need. Private and public enterprises working on intelligent transport have been brought together into a single 'ITS Estonia network' to increase the efficiency, environmental sustainability, and safety of the transportation and logistics sector. At Tallinn University's initiative, the 'Proovikivi platform' (Touchstone platform) was established, bringing together young people and community partners to face common challenges. The Estonian National Youth Council, an umbrella organization, promotes young people's social change engagement, running the UN Young Delegate Programme, introducing young people to the UN institutions, and the SDGs in formal education represent Estonian youth in UN institutions.

No specific activities to implement the SDGs carried out by parliamentarians are considered out of law adoption.

Means of implementation
The VNR considers a wide range of the 2030 Agenda means of implementation. It points out that 'the development of digital technology and e-governance in Estonia has contributed to economic development, good governance, transparency, resource efficiency, and human development' (p.104). Regarding capacity building, initiatives to improve workers' skills are in place. Systemic issues to reduce the root causes of migration and bring the Central Mediterranean migration route under control are informed. Trade and national and international 2030 Agenda financing initiatives are also integrated into the report.

Even if no SDGs' country-level implementation costing exercise is reported, national and international funding is considered critical. EU funds are mentioned in specific cases as SDGs related programs funding sources.

Measurement and reporting
The report does not provide information on data availability, including disaggregated data. It includes unofficial data, informing that data collection among non-governmental organizations and companies, among others, have been used as the basis for the review. A study will be conducted in 2019–2021 under Tallinn University's leadership to analyze the unexplained part of the country's gender pay gap.

The report also notes efforts in developing new data-based technologies, stating that 'More and more research and development projects related to remote monitoring and the introduction of satellite data are being implemented in Estonia.'

In 2019, a measuring instrument of Estonia's SDGs indicators, the 'Tree of Truth,' was completed. It is available on the web (https://tamm.stat.ee/), providing an overview of the goal by goal state of implementation by all government areas.

This year VNR uses tables to reflect the current indicators situation compared to the data reported in 2016, making no mention of how the national reporting will continue in the future.

FINLAND

In 2020, Finland submitted its second voluntary national review (VNR) report to the United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. The country's first presentation was in 2016.

GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS

Leadership, governance and institutions

The Prime Minister is responsible for implementation of the 2030 Agenda in Finland. According to the VNR report, two institutions – the National Commission on Sustainable Development (which has been led by Prime Ministers since 1993) and the Development Policy Committee – work in tandem to ensure coherence in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) both at the national level and with regards to international cooperation. The Secretaries General of both bodies participate in each other's Commission/Committee as permanent experts. Moreover, both institutions count with non-state actors' participation, as civil society and other stakeholders are officially engaged in both mechanisms to contribute to sustainable development in Finland. In terms of regional coordination on the SDGs, the VNR report mentions that the country's work on sustainability is complemented by Finland's engagement in Generation 2030, a joint work on the 2030 Agenda being carried out in the framework of the Nordic Council of Ministers.

Stakeholder engagement

The VNR report mentions that one of Finland's key instruments for implementing the 2030 Agenda is called Society's Commitment to Sustainable Development. This multi-stakeholder engagement mechanism is a long-term strategy that provides an implementation tool for any sector, organization or individual who wishes to participate in the 2030 Agenda implementation by carrying out concrete actions. With regards to the VNR process, multiple stakeholders were engaged, including civil society organizations (CSOs), trade unions, and United Nations associations. The VNR report does not mention impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on stakeholder engagement, as the mechanisms in place can fully operate in a virtual environment.

GOOD PRACTICE SPOTLIGHT

In Finland, civil society participates in the analysis of the country's progress in each one of the SDGs. In the goal-by-goal analysis of the VNR report, one page is dedicated to the government's assessment and another contains other stakeholders' assessment. Under each one of the 17 SDGs, while the government describes successes and key policy initiatives, the pages written by civil society point out challenges and propose recommendations. This good practice of a joint analysis corroborates a whole-of-society approach and presents a more holistic view of the country's progress around the SDGs.

POLICIES

Baseline or gap analysis

The mapping of SDG indicators made it possible for Finland to build a database containing national data for 161 global indicators of the total set of 244 internationally agreed indicators, which represents 66% of indicators. Data come from both national and international sources and are presented in a detailed annex that contains targets and indicators for all the SDGs. From the assessment carried out, the VNR report presents information on gaps and regressions in progress across the SDGs examined.

Incorporating the SDGs

The SDGs are incorporated into national development plans and related policies and frameworks and through the use of a national SDG implementation strategy. According to the VNR report, it is current practice

for Finland's governments to submit 2030 Agenda implementation plans to the country's parliament as government reports. This year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the report had to be postponed from April 2020 to autumn 2020. The VNR report mentions that this year's government's report will bring, apart from the commitment to the 2030 Agenda and the implementation plan itself, the government's measures for each one of the SDGs. In terms of principles for 2030 Agenda implementation, the VNR report refers to all the five principles, namely the human rights-based approach, leaving no one behind (with a dedicated chapter and mentions throughout the VNR report), planetary boundaries, universality, and inter-generational responsibility.

Nationalizing the 2030 Agenda

Finland has identified national priorities for 2030 Agenda implementation. The VNR report lists four priority areas that relate to gender equality (women and girls), economy (sustainable economies and decent jobs), education and democracy (education and democratic societies), and environment (climate resilience and natural resources). Targets and indicators to support these priorities have been identified at the national level and are aligned to the global targets and indicators.

Integration and policy coherence

The VNR report provides an examination of all 17 SDGs with an equal focus on all three dimensions of sustainable development. It also refers to applicable linkages between economic, social and environmental dimensions in the analysis of specific goals, targets and indicators. Finland has mechanisms to approach policy coherence to sustainable development, and has assessed domestic and foreign policies on the realization of SDGs globally. For example, the VNR report mentions Finland's global responsibility in contributing to international crisis management and supporting developing countries by, for instance, facilitating the repatriation of refugees and internally displaced persons and contributing to recover arable land to lower tensions. In terms of international agreements, the VNR report refers to the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol, to the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, and to the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. There are no references to Aid Effectiveness and Development Effectiveness Agendas or to COVID-19 commitments.

IMPLEMENTING THE 2030 AGENDA

Leave no one behind

In terms of those at risk of being left behind, Finland identifies women, girls, persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples (Sámi), ethnic groups, visible minorities, poor people, those living alone (who are more in risk of poverty), the underemployed, single parents, immigrants, people with long-term illnesses, imprisoned inmates, and young people with only a basic qualification. According to the VNR report, efforts to leave no one behind (LNOB) include universal programs. There is reference to social and employment policies, and human rights considerations both at the domestic and international levels. On reducing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the VNR report refers to changes in the short-term economic policy agenda, which include investment in employment actions, social- and healthcare reformation, and increase in productivity. According to the VNR report, universal social security and service systems, added to equal educational opportunities, have prevented exclusion and provided an environment of open governance and peaceful and democratic societies.

Awareness raising and localization

The VNR report notes that different awareness raising activities have been carried out since 2016 in cooperation between the government, civil society and the private sector. According to the VNR report, a recent poll showed that 47% of the Finnish population is aware of the 2030 Agenda. In terms of localization efforts, work has been carried out at the local government level since Finland's first VNR in 2016 revealed that cities had insufficient knowledge of the 2030 Agenda.

Partnership to realize the SDGs

The VNR report recognizes the roles of non-state actors in implementing the 2030 Agenda. It highlights examples of actions being carried out by parliamentarians, civil society, the private sector, academics and experts, children and youth, and other stakeholders such as the media and marketing industries. Activities towards implementation include awareness raising actions within the government, integration of the SDGs into business strategies, research and knowledge exchange around sustainability issues, climate work, and work towards literacy and skills, including digital. One of

Finland's key instruments for partnership and civil society engagement lies on Society's Commitment to Sustainable Development, through which actors take part in the promotion of one or more SDGs, both in Finland and globally. According to the VNR report, over 1,000 organizations and almost 1,500 private citizens have already made concrete commitments to sustainable development.

GOOD PRACTICE SPOTLIGHT

According to the VNR report, Finland's cities conduct extensive work around sustainable development. For example, the region of Åland has integrated the SDGs into core strategies, and many cities and municipalities are developing plans to promote the SDGs. A good practice arising in terms of localization is the presentation of Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs). For example, the cities of Helsinki, Espoo, and Turku have prepared such reports in 2019 and 2020, and should be followed by other cities in the future.

Means of implementation

According to the VNR report, sustainable development has been included in Finland's budget. Moreover, country level implementation has been costed and the country has identified sources of finance. The government estimates the total 2020 budget amounts to about 57.7 billion euros, and refers to funding from the European Union Framework Programme to finance research, development and innovation (RDI) activities focusing on solving challenges related to sustainability. Moreover, the VNR report mentions that Finland has emphasised mainstreaming the SDGs for the 2021-2017 financial period programming. Technology and capacity development are recognized as means of overall implementation of the 2030 Agenda. In terms of international public finance, the VNR report refers to Finland's contributions to official development assistance (ODA), and lists international financing, trade and partnerships as effective means of implementation for both developing and developed countries.

Measurement and reporting

Statistics Finland aims to continuously improve data collection. Moreover, new data sources and proxy indicators, as well as data produced by international development work, will continue to be explored as supplementary data, according to the VNR report, which also identifies future challenges regarding further disaggregation of the data. According to the VNR report, an assessment conducted by the National Audit Office concluded that the Government Annual Reports on the 2030 Agenda implementation have both provided a comprehensive summary of the policies and measures taken every year, and acted as publicly available information sources on the achievements around sustainable development. In terms of VNR reporting, the VNR report mentions that Finland is committed to reporting to the United Nations every four to five years. For this 2020 VNR report, in addition to existing mechanisms for stakeholder participation, including consultation, stakeholders were invited to independently write parts of the VNR report.

GAMBIA

In 2020, The Gambia submitted its first voluntary national review (VNR) report to the United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS

Leadership, governance and institutions

A Ministerial Steering Committee and technical sector working groups are responsible for 2030 Agenda implementation. Leadership resides with multiple cabinet ministers in this regard. According to the VNR report, the government will retain the VNR Coordinating Committee that oversaw the VNR, transforming it into a technical SDG coordination mechanism, which will add to other already existing technical Sector Working Groups. The VNR report also provides information regarding the inclusion of non-state actors in governance structures, pointing to a "robust institutional framework" to enable stakeholder participation and accountability and mentioning that the National SDGs Steering Committee and the Sector Working Groups include representatives from the UN System, the private sector, civil society, women and youth organizations, among others.

Stakeholder engagement

The VNR report indicated that civil society, the private sector and youth were engaged in the VNR process, including through workshops. It also noted plans to disseminate the VNR report in partnership with other stakeholders and to use this process to update the government's SDG Road Map, incorporating the views solicited through the VNR. In terms of mechanisms for ongoing stakeholder engagement, the VNR report notes that the Coordination Unit at the Department of Strategic Policy and Delivery of the office of the President provides high level coordination mechanisms to facilitate coordination between diverse stakeholders (government institutions, members of the legislature, civil society, private sector, local government representatives, youth, women, development partners, persons with disabilities and academia). According to the VNR report, one of the aims of such mechanisms is to address any gaps and challenges regarding collaboration among stakeholders.

POLICIES

Baseline or gap analysis

According to the VNR report, the Gambia plans to assess data availability to better understand data needs, sources and data collection methodologies. Lack of available data was highlighted as a challenge through the VNR process. Niger examined all SDGs except SDG 14, life below water, as Niger is a landlocked country.

Incorporating the SDGs

The Gambia mainstreamed the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into the National Development Plan (2018 – 2021). This process enabled alignment of development priorities with SDG targets and indicators. The VNR report also notes the existence of an SDG Road Map, which the government plans to update based on inputs from the VNR as noted above. In terms of 2030 Agenda principles, the VNR report mentions leaving no one behind and refers to preserving the environment for future generations.

Nationalizing the 2030 Agenda

The National Development Plan includes eight priorities and seven critical enablers aligned with the SDGs. The strategic priorities focus on issues related to 1) governance, 2) economic growth, 3) agriculture and natural resources, 4) social services, 5) infrastructure, 6) tourism, 7) youth and 8) private sector development. Environmental sustainability is noted as one of the seven critical enablers. The VNR report does not indicate that national level targets and indicators have been selected.

Integration and policy coherence

The VNR report provides a summary overview of all 17 SDGs, though has a more limited focus on environmental dimensions. The goal-by-goal analysis makes limited references to the linkages between economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. While the report does not explicitly refer to policy coherence for sustainable development, it does refer to a number of relevant international agreements for 2030 Agenda implementation. These include the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, Paris Agreement on Climate

Change, Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, Samoa Pathway and Istanbul and Vienna Programmes of Action. In relation to COVID-19, the VNR report includes information on the impacts of the pandemic throughout, as well as in a dedicated annex.

(2030) IMPLEMENTING THE 2030 AGENDA

Leave no one behind

The VNR report identifies women, children, youth, persons with disabilities, people living with HIV/AIDS, rural dwellers and the elderly as at risk of being left behind. Efforts appear to be informed by existing data, and gender disaggregated data is mostly available in the VNR report. According to the VNR report, the government has focused on creating an enabling policy environment to ensure the provision of basic services through social protection mechanisms. A new initiative, the Programme for Accelerated Community Development, is presented in the VNR report as a way to LNOB and promote greater equity and social justice. The VNR report also outlines specific legislation to benefit groups at risk of being left behind. With respect to the impacts of COVID-19, the VNR report outlines measures to ensure continued education as well as food support for 84% of households in the country.

Awareness raising and localization

The VNR report indicates that awareness-raising activities have been carried out with parliament and the public more generally. A workshop on Parliamentary action to implement and monitor the SDGs was held and the VNR process was used to further raise awareness of the SDGs, including through workshops with the private sector and civil society. The government plans to continue to roll out awareness-raising activities on an ongoing basis incorporating media, traditional communicators and publicity materials in local languages. The VNR report also notes plans to incorporate the SDGs into school curriculum. With respect to localization, the VNR report notes efforts to mainstream the SDGs into national, sectoral and sub-national levels. Local authorities will be engaged through regional development plans (including support to develop these plans) and initiative such as Voluntary Local Reviews as a means to track progress at all levels.

Partnership to realize the SDGs

The VNR report references the importance of multi-stakeholder action to accelerate SDGs implementation.

While it recognizes the need to deepen private sector participation, the VNR report does not mention specific activities by the private sector to support 2030 Agenda implementation. It does however note the identification of SDG Champions in the National Assembly to promote the 2030 Agenda as well as specific projects implemented by civil society organizations to implement the SDGs. Similar to the private sector, the VNR report notes the importance of further strengthening coordination with civil society to leverage their contributions to the 2030 Agenda. The VNR report points to a number of capacity gaps, particularly for government actors at national and local levels, for which assistance from development partners would be welcome.

Means of implementation

The VNR report highlights lessons learned as well as challenges. The need to raise awareness of the 2030 Agenda is noted, in addition to efforts to strengthen the national statistical system to support follow-up and review. In terms of challenges, The Gambia is hindered by debt sustainability and the need to strengthen the management of aid resources as well as overall revenue administrative processes. The government has invested efforts into improving financial management systems and tracking the use of public resources as important means to implement the SDGs. The VNR report notes a strong interest on the part of the government in increasing financial flows overall. The government has identified domestic resources, foreign direct investment, public-private partnerships, remittance and foreign assistance as sources of finance. With the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the VNR report notes an increasing alliance on domestic resource mobilization to reduce dependence on volatile aid flows.

Measurement and reporting

According to the VNR report, the Gambia has data for 33.9% of SDG indicators. To improve available data and track progress, the government plans to establish a coordination unit in the national statistical office to support disaggregated data collection, ensure quality and analyze SDG indicators at national and sub-national levels.

The Directorate of Development Planning coordinates a national monitoring and evaluation platform, supported by the national statistical office. The platform supports monitoring of the National Development Plan and the SDGs. According to the VNR report, non-state actors will be included in the platform. The VNR report refers to the creation of SDG reports and future VNR reports but does not provide information regarding when these reports will be produced.

GEORGIA

In 2020, Georgia submitted its second voluntary national review (VNR) report to the United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF). Its first presentation was in 2016.

GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS

Leadership, governance and institutions

Georgia's VNR report mentions that the country's administration of government has been leading nationalization and coordination processes of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) since 2015. The key coordination body for implementing the national SDGs targets is the Sustainable Development Goals Inter-Agency Council (SDG Council), which is chaired by the head of the administration of the government of Georgia. Such council comprises working groups that engage stakeholders from the public, civil, international, academic and private sectors, according to the VNR report.

Stakeholder engagement

The VNR report states that non-state actors have been included in the VNR process. The draft was circulated among four thematic working groups that compose the institutional framework around the SDGs and consist of civil society organizations (CSOs), international organizations, think tanks, academia, development partners and private sector. Moreover, in order to encourage public debate and opinion and to provide space for participatory and collaborative consultations, the draft VNR report was also made available on a dedicated website on the SDGs. Apart from such engagement in the VNR process and the inclusion of non-state actors in governance structures for the implementation of the SDGs (the SDG Council), the VNR report does not indicate that a broader mechanism for stakeholder engagement has been established.

POLICIES

Baseline or gap analysis

According to the VNR report, the State Audit Office of Georgia (SAOG) conducted an assessment on the national preparedness for implementation of the SDGs. The audit helped to identify shortcomings that include ensuring linkages between the SDGs and Georgia's instruments for budget planning, and localization of the SDGs. Furthermore, in 2019, the United Nations Development Programme in Georgia supported a MAPS (Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support for the 2030 Agenda) study to identify the state of play of the SDGs in the country. Some of the gaps identified as a result of the gap analysis refer to targets missing for SDGs 5 (Gender equality), 10 (Reduced inequalities), 16 (Peace, justice and strong institutions) and 17 (Partnerships for the goals).

Incorporating the SDGs

According to the VNR report, Georgia's government acknowledges the importance of a whole-of-government approach to advance the country's policies towards development. In addition, it has aligned the SDGs to the national policy process and has adopted a "National Document for the Sustainable Development Goals". In terms of the 2030 Agenda principles, the VNR report refers to a human rights-based approach, and the principle of leaving no one behind has been designated as a cross-cutting priority covering all 5Ps (*People*, Planet, *Prosperity*, *Peace*, and Partnerships) areas. The universality of the Agenda, planetary boundaries and inter-generational responsibility are not covered by the VNR report.

Nationalizing the 2030 Agenda

Georgia has prepared national targets and indicators, and the VNR report states those are aligned to the global targets and indicators. A European Union-Georgia Association Agreement has incorporated 63% of the country's nationalized SDG targets, including targets missing from other national strategies. When added to this agreement, Georgia's 36 national strategies jointly incorporate 96% of the country's nationalized SDG

targets. In terms of national priorities, the VNR report mentions three priority areas covering almost all the SDGs, namely: human capital development and social welfare (SDGs 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 10), economic growth (SDGs 7, 8, 9, 10, 12), and democratic governance (SDGs 5, 10, 16).

Integration and policy coherence

The VNR report does not cover six SDGs, namely SDG 6 (Clean water and sanitation), 11 (Sustainable cities and communities), 13 (Climate action), 14 (Life below water), 15 (Life on land), and 17 (Partnerships for the goals). All the three dimensions have been addressed by the VNR report, but with a limited focus on environmental. There is also limited reference to linkages between economic, social and environmental dimensions in the analysis of goals, targets and indicators. According to the VNR report, Georgia's main focus is on "people," with "prosperity" coming second, "peace" third, "planet" fourth and "partnership" last, following the 5Ps framework. It also notes the lack of sufficient cross-cutting elements and coordination. Although the VNR report refers to climate change, it does not mention the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. It does not mention other international agreements either, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Aid Effectiveness and Development Effectiveness Agendas, or COVID-19-related commitments.

(2030) IMPLEMENTING THE 2030 AGENDA

Leave no one behind

Georgia's need to generate and gather better quality data to leave no one behind (LNOB) has been identified in the VNR report. However, the LNOB principle has been designated as a cross-cutting priority for the country, particularly considering the health, social and economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The targets of efforts to LNOB include poor people, people with disabilities, migrants and refugees, ethnic minorities, women, children, LGBTQI+ community, prisoners, and youth. The VNR report highlights some results of the country's approaches, which are carried out through universal programs such as social assistance, and both existing and new specialized programs for specific groups. Such results include the reduction of prevalence of stunting

among children under 5 years old, the increase in the number of students (including students with disabilities) financed by state's programs, and the increase in the percentage of prisoners (especially female) involved in education and vocational training programs.

Awareness raising and localization

The VNR report does not refer to awareness-raising campaigns being carried out around the SDGs, although it does refer to specific campaigns that relate to the SDGs. For example, there have been efforts to raise awareness about road safety, which relates to SDG 3 (Health and well-being), or to gender pay gap, which relates to SDG 5 (Gender equality). The VNR report recognizes that the SDGs implementation at the local level is slightly falling behind. To address this issue, the secretariat of the SDGs elaborated an action plan in line with the government's decentralization strategy (adopted in 2019) so that the localization of the SDGs can be more effective. Furthermore, the country's updated version of the statute of the SDGs Council has ensured that mayors and deputy mayors of municipalities are included in the council's membership.

Partnership to realize the SDGs

Although the VNR report provides some examples of non-state actor participation in the SDGs implementation, it is vague on the precise extent of such participation. In terms of the private sector, for example, the VNR report refers to government actions to engage that sector, but does not detail initiatives beyond public-private partnerships. Parliamentarians and academia are carrying out activities towards the achievement of some goals (targeting, for example, health, gender equality, and education), but actions developed by other stakeholders such as civil society and children and youth are not mentioned.

Means of implementation

The VNR report identifies challenges for the SDGs implementation. These include an uneven degree of horizontal cooperation, the lagging of implementation at the local level, and the intensification of conflicts. With regards to the later, the VNR report highlights the Russian occupation of two regions of Georgia as a challenge to human rights and freedoms and the progress of the SDGs. Partnerships and support are identified as important factors to tackle this situation. The VNR report also notes that elements such as peer

learning, technology, capacity development and trade are constituent parts of the process of implementing the SDGs. In terms of budgeting, the VNR report recognizes that some SDGs (namely SDGs 1, 3, 4, 9, 10 and 16) have received the largest shares of the country's budget, whereas others (namely SDGs 5, 6, 12, 13, 14 and 15) have been set to account for only 3% of the total programed budget. There is no reference to financing Agenda 2030 at the country level, or to international public finance.

Measurement and reporting

The VNR report does not articulate the percentage of SDG indicators for which data is available. On the other hand, it mentions the implementation of a Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) in order to fill the existing data gap for the SDGs framework. The MICS included over 180 indicators and provided regionally representative data that can be disaggregated and that provided baseline values for many indicators of the nationalized SDGs. The VNR report describes progress being made since the first VNR, presented in 2016, by referring to the integration of the SDGs into national planning and the achievement of the objectives the country had set in the process of working towards the SDGs. However, apart from the VNR processes themselves, other mechanisms of national reporting on the SDGs are not articulated in the VNR report.

HONDURAS

In 2020, Honduras submitted its second voluntary national review (VNR) report to the United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. The first was introduced in 2017.

GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS

Leadership, governance and institutions

According to the 2020 VNR report, the national governance structure for 2030 Agenda implementation has changed since the country's first report in 2017. Since December 2019, the 2030 Agenda implementation is led by a multistakeholder Sustainable Development National Commission led by the General Government Coordination Secretariat and composed of representatives from the government, the Council of Higher Education, the Honduran Council of Private Enterprise, workers and peasant organizations, civil society and local governments. Permanent guests representing the National Institute of Statistics, The Honduras National Institute for Women and international cooperation partners, among others, participate in its debates. To carry out its functions, the Commission receives operational assistance from a Technical Secretary, Associations of Municipalities, open Thematic Work Tables and a Technical Committee for Sustainable Development. The last is composed of high-level technicians from each Commission member institution, the National Institute of Statistics and international cooperation partners.

Stakeholder engagement

Besides stakeholders' participation in the Sustainable Development National Commission, the VNR report presents no mechanism or process for broader stakeholder engagement. However, there with respect to the second VNR, the VNR report notes that the process was affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly in terms of "the discussion and validation of the report with stakeholders in workshops at the national and regional levels" (p.12). Nevertheless, the VNR report does not fully lay out details on the VNR consultation process.

POLICIES

Baseline or gap analysis

Nor the 2020 VNR neither the previous one presented in 2017 refer to gap analysis or baseline studies. Although the second report recognized significant national structural gaps in social, economic and environmental issues that "should be considered [as part of] the background of the National SDG Agenda goals and indicators baseline" (p.25). The National SDGs Agenda established the data for the year 2015 or the nearest year from which measurements will begin as national baselines, but this is not mentioned in the VNR report.

Incorporating the SDGs

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were incorporated through a National SDGs Agenda adopted in 2019 as the national strategy for 2030 Agenda implementation. It is expected that the National SDGs Agenda will be included as part of the 2022-2034 National Development Plan. Sectoral policies were also aligned with the SDGs. The VNR report only makes reference to the 2030 Agenda principle to leave no one behind (LNOB).

Nationalizing the 2030 Agenda

The report repeatedly refers to the national priorities adopted as part of the National SDGs Agenda but never identifies them. Moreover, the National SDGs Agenda text does not set national priorities, stating that the country does not have priority goals. Instead, that Agenda prioritizes 69 targets and 99 indicators resulting from a series of Honduran development planning documents, namely the Country Vision to 2038, the National Plan 2022 and the Strategic Government Plan 2018-2022. However, this information is not presented in the actual VNR report.

Integration and policy coherence

The VNR report examines all 17 SDGs briefly, providing

limited details. While it addresses the three sustainable development dimensions, emphasizing environmental elements, links between the dimensions are barely included under the analysis of each goal. There are no references to policy coherence for sustainable development, and none of the main international agreements linked with the 2030 Agenda are explicitly mentioned such as the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. The 2020 VNR report includes information on the impacts and challenges that result from the COVID-19 pandemic in a stand-alone chapter.

IMPLEMENTING THE 2030 AGENDA

Leave no one behind
Throughout the VNR report, the following groups are mentioned as vulnerable: the elderly, people with disabilities, indigenous and afro-descendants peoples, households in extreme poverty, women and girls. Disaggregated data for these groups, and women, are rarely available. Nevertheless, the VNR report includes information on universal and specialized programs focused on vulnerable groups such as the National Program for Employment Generation and Economic Growth that assists the private sector in creating employment opportunities and the Poverty Reduction Program oriented to provide health and food self-production support to families living under the poverty line. When analyzing the impacts of COVID-19, the VNR report does not include specific measures to protect the most vulnerable groups from the impacts identified.

Awareness raising and localization
The VNR report does not provide information on government efforts to raise awareness of the 2030 Agenda. Regarding localization, the VNR report states that efforts have been made in partnership with local governments to implement the National SDGs Agenda but does not identify them.

Partnership to realize the SDGs
The VNR report's text refers to the relevance of establishing partnerships to reach the SDGs, but no specific description of non-state actors' contributions to that end is made. Mentions of stakeholders are vague, noting the importance of non-state actors but not providing concrete examples. The only concrete work with partners outlined in the text is the support provided by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean and the United Nations System in Honduras to carry out the VNR.

Means of implementation
Capacity development, technology, and international public finance are referred to as SDGs' means of implementation. National public expenditure is highlighted as the primary source of finance for SDG implementation. Systemic issues are also included, namely the impacts of the increase in external debt, the recessive effects of COVID-19 on the global economy and the foreseeable difficulty in accessing external financial resources. The implications of COVID-19 are considered a threat to Honduras' progress since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda. The report notes concerns over progress regarding a wide range of SDGs relates issues, from poverty increase and job loss to increased inequality and a reduction in tax revenue.

Measurement and reporting
Honduras' National Statistical System provides less than 30% of the data required to follow up on the global indicators at the country level. The VNR report does not include information on plans to improve data availability and disaggregated data is rarely available across the VNR report. No reference is made to national reporting plans. Moreover, the linkage between the 2017 and the 2020 VNR reports is weak. While the second report includes descriptions of advancements made since the first one, it makes use of data from 2015, resulting in an overlap of content between the two reports with no real narrative of changes in trends.

INDIA

In 2020, India submitted its second voluntary national review (VNR) report to the United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF). Its first presentation was in 2017.

GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS

Leadership, governance and institutions

India's 2017 VNR report mentioned the National Institution for Transforming India as the think tank providing coordination and leadership for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) implementation. The 2020 VNR report still refers to that institution (referred to as NITI Aayog) as the nodal body mandated to oversee the progress of the 2030 Agenda. It is headed by the Prime Minister of India. While the 2017 VNR report made no mention of how non-state actors were involved in governance and institutional mechanism for SDGs implementation, the 2020 VNR report explains that NITI Aayog coordinates and monitors the SDGs in the country in close collaboration with the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, which works alongside state and non-state actors (such as the United Nations system, think tanks and civil society organizations) in conducting the adoption, implementation and monitoring of the 2030 Agenda. In terms of regional coordination on the SDGs, the Indian Parliament organized a conference on 'Strengthening Regional Cooperation and Resources for the SDGs' during the South Asian Speakers' Summit on Achieving the SDGs.

Stakeholder engagement

According to the VNR report, India has adopted a paradigm shift from a 'whole of government' to 'a whole of society' approach, which engages several stakeholders, such as subnational and local governments, civil society organizations (CSOs), volunteers, local communities and the private sector. The process of engagement is inclusive and collaborative and focuses on the adoption, implementation and evaluation of the SDGs agenda. Moreover, the VNR process itself is understood as a testament to this whole-of-society paradigm as it included contributions from multi-level governments and civil society. The VNR report mentions that consultations including local governments, CSOs, academia, think tanks, and international organizations were carried out at both the national and subnational levels on the SDGs and their implementation strategies. However, the VNR report is not clear with regards to consultations with non-state actors to define national priorities. One civil society report was prepared by Wada Na Todo Abhiyan in relation to the VNR.

POLICIES

Baseline or gap analysis

The VNR report mentions that a National Indicator Framework (NIF) baseline report was released in 2019, followed by its first progress report, released in 2020. According to these two reports, each of the 297 indicators were mapped in terms of periodicity of data availability, baseline reference period and data sources. While the 2017 VNR report did not set out gaps based on the assessments conducted, the 2020 VNR report mentions data gaps and lists challenges and specific efforts being carried out in the way forward in the goal-by-goal analysis.

Incorporating the SDGs

According to the VNR report, NITI Aayog has devised a strategy for SDGs implementation. In addition, it has developed a national strategy document named 'Strategy for New India@75' that relates to the SDGs and their related targets throughout the strategic domains. The strategy document outlines sectors which have been mapped to meet relevant SDGs and where transformation is targeted. Moreover, the VNR report mentions that NITI Aayog has modified its earlier mapping of the 17 SDGs in order to ensure that the governments' programs and initiatives are interconnected with the SDGs and their targets.

Nationalizing the 2030 Agenda

The VNR report outlines five pillars that are understood as national priorities for India. Such sectors have been grouped into four clusters: drivers, infrastructure, inclusion and governance. While both the pillars and the clusters can be related to the SDGs (for example in the sense of strengthening human capital, or incrementing the country's economy), the VNR report does not explicitly detail which SDGs are linked to each one of the national priorities.

Integration and policy coherence

India's VNR report provides a detailed examination of all 17 SDGs and mentions both targets and indicators. As it was the case in the country's 2017 VNR report, the 2020 one provides equal attention to economic, social and environmental dimensions. Although the linkages between the three dimensions are mentioned in the 2020 VNR report and seen as an important aspect to be taken into consideration, there are no detailed examples of such connections through targets and indicators. Different from the first VNR report, the second one refers to policy coherence and understands that for it to be effective knowledge, awareness, and multi-stakeholder engagement are necessary. With regards to international agreements, the VNR report provides linkages with the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. There is no reference to Aid Effectiveness and Development Effectiveness Agendas or to COVID-19 commitments.

2030 IMPLEMENTING THE 2030 AGENDA

Leave no one behind

The VNR report has a dedicated chapter to leaving no one behind (LNOB), which mentions that several consultations were conducted with an array of groups and communities identified as vulnerable or at risk of being left behind. In terms of data for LNOB, the VNR report recognizes the need for more data, for example with regards to persons with disabilities. A number of programs that target vulnerable groups are mentioned, including social assistance and new and existing programs targeting specific groups, such as women, children, migrants, people living in poverty, people living with HIV/AIDS, the LGBTQIA+ community, scheduled tribes and castes.

GOOD PRACTICE SPOTLIGHT

India's civil society held a series of national consultations with vulnerable communities around the SDGs. The process was headed by Wada Na Todo Abhiyan, which coordinated the action with both the government (through NITI Aayog) and the United Nations Resident Coordinator's Office (UNRCO). According to the civil society report, over a thousand organizations participated in the consultation process, and more than half of them also engaged in the national consultations carried out by the government. Wada Na Todo Abhiyan's civil society report focuses each one of its chapters on a specific group likely to be left behind, and each chapter includes challenges and recommendations to address them. Moreover, the inputs from the civil society consultations were used by NITI Aayog while drafting the VNR report's standalone chapter on LNOB.

Awareness raising and localization

The VNR report mentions some government initiatives on sensitization and awareness building measures on the SDGs and their implementation strategies. Such efforts involved central and local governments, civil society organizations, academia, among other stakeholders. With regards to localization efforts, the VNR report mentions a new program for rapid transformation of India's districts performing below expectations in terms of areas that include health, education, water resources, and basic infrastructure. Furthermore, a conclave was held for the states of India's North Eastern Region on the topic of sustainable development strategies for the region, under the framework of SDGs. It involved several stakeholders and produced a range of recommendations that are being pursued by local and central governments alike, according to the VNR report.

Partnership to realize the SDGs

As in the 2017 VNR report, the 2020 one mentions actions being carried out by different stakeholders

towards the achievement of the SDGs. Parliamentarians, civil society, and the private sector are currently acting as partners in this sense. However, the VNR report does not mention specific actions being conducted by academia or children and youth. On the other hand, it highlights one initiative developed by one Police Department towards education. The action gathers teachers of government schools, elders, social workers and volunteers to teach students who are either in dropout situations or whose performance in school is below the expected.

Means of implementation

While the 2017 VNR report did not lay out best practices, lessons learned or challenges for India, the 2020 VNR report outlines all of those aspects. Moreover, it notes the importance of peer learning, technology, capacity development and trade as means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

GOOD PRACTICE SPOTLIGHT

In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, India leveraged digital and information capacity to develop an information exchange platform to be used by the eight countries of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). In addition to this platform, named 'SAARC COVID-19 Information Exchange Platform (COINEX)', India put a digital network in place to deliver medical expertise content to be used for training purposes of healthcare personnel in neighbouring countries.

Measurement and reporting

The VNR report does not outline data availability for SDG implementation and points out to a gap in the availability of disaggregated data. However, disaggregated indicators are mentioned in the goal-by-goal analysis. India's 2020 VNR report describes both challenges and progresses in relation to the country's first VNR. In terms of monitoring implementation, state-level committees have put mechanisms in place to ensure coordinated action on the SDGs. Moreover, the VNR report mentions monitoring and evaluation systems established in some of the country's states to track progress against the SDGs' targets and indicators. Technological tools are mentioned, such as dashboards, citizen feedback loops and sensors for real-time monitoring. Furthermore, according to the VNR report, India's government developed and updated the SDG India Index. This monitoring instrument is based on data related to the SDGs, includes indicators from the National Indicator Framework (NIF), and is comprehensive to be used by stakeholders such as policymakers, the private sector and civil society.

Civil society validity check

India's country profile has been reviewed by a representative of Wada Na Todo Abhiyan.

KENYA

In 2020, Kenya submitted its second voluntary national review (VNR) report to the United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF). Its first presentation was in 2017.

GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS

Leadership, governance and institutions
An SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals) Coordination Directorate sits with the State Department of Planning. Responsible for 2030 Agenda implementation, the Directorate is supported by a multi-stakeholder Inter-Agency Technical Working Committee. The committee includes representatives from government institutions, the Council of Governors, the private sector, civil society, the parliamentary SDGs Caucus, United Nations Country Teams, the National Youth Council and academia.

Stakeholder engagement
According to the VNR report, the government has sought to strengthen engagements, institutional and coordination mechanisms through a Multi-Stakeholder Engagement Framework. For the VNR, the multi-stakeholder Inter-Agency Technical Committee Working Group was used to prepare guidelines. Umbrella associations consulted with their members through workshops and online platforms, and prepared reports that were submitted to the SDGs coordination Directorate for inclusion in the draft VNR report. As a result of COVID-19, the VNR report validation process occurred online and the collection of disaggregated data, good practices and grassroots inputs was restricted.

POLICIES

Baseline or gap analysis
The VNR report highlights a detailed analysis of sectoral policy alignment with and contributions to SDG targets. The study found overall relatively good alignment with sectoral policies contributing partially or fully to 92 of 138 relevant SDGs targets (67%). The VNR report notes gaps with respect to gender, youth, poverty reduction,

transport, security, energy and inclusive and sustainable cities.

Incorporating the SDGs
The SDGs have been mainstreamed into government policy, planning and budgeting processes. The country's Third Medium Term Plan (2018-2022) is also aligned with the SDGs. The VNR report makes reference to the human rights-based nature of the 2030 Agenda and efforts to leave no one behind (LNOB). While it does not refer specifically to inter-generational equity or responsibility, it does note that the government is required to borrow responsibly to protect the interests of future generations.

Nationalizing the 2030 Agenda
The government has developed the "Big 4 Agenda" that outlines national priorities pertaining to food and nutrition security, universal health coverage, manufacturing and affordable housing. According to the VNR report, the government has prepared national complementary indicators based on the Third Medium Term plan to complement SDG monitoring. National level targets have also been established, aligned with the SDGs (132 out of 138 relevant SDG targets).

Integration and policy coherence
The VNR report provides a detailed examination of all 17 SDGs though it tends to have a greater focus on social dimensions of sustainable development. The goal-by-goal analysis only makes limited references of the linkages between dimension of sustainable development. The VNR report refers to policy coherence for sustainable development, understood in terms of coherence against five key performance areas related to good governance, resourcing for decentralized functions and inter-governmental relations, among others. The VNR report mentions the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.

2030 IMPLEMENTING THE 2030 AGENDA

Leave no one behind

The VNR report identifies the following groups as at risk of being left behind: intersex persons, albinism, refugees, the stateless, homeless families, outdoor sleepers and persons with disabilities, orphans and vulnerable children and older persons. Efforts appear to be informed by existing baselines and available data, and the VNR report consistently presents gender disaggregated data. According to the VNR report, LNOB is "at the heart" of Kenya's approach to 2030 Agenda implementation as noted in various policy documents. Social protection is a key part of Kenya's approach to LNOB with the government establishing a National Social Protection Policy that includes interventions in the areas of social assistance, social security and health insurance. The VNR report also lists specific efforts to LNOB in the analysis of most goals.

Awareness raising and localization

The VNR report outlines awareness raising activities directed at local and national levels of government, civil society, academia, schools, marginalized groups and the public. In particular, it notes focus group discussions, sensitization fora, workshops, discussion panels and social media communication. With respect to localization, the VNR report notes ongoing efforts to strengthen capacities of sub-national (and national) level governments to mainstream the 2030 Agenda into policies, planning, budgeting, implementation and review. It notes the creation of an SDGs curriculum to this effect.

Partnership to realize the SDGs

The VNR report has a strong emphasis on partnership with diverse stakeholders, recognizing the roles of governments, citizens, the private sector, media, academia and development partners. It highlights the SDGs Kenya Forum that provides an opportunity for citizen engagement. With respect to parliament, a Kenya Parliamentary Caucus on SDGs and Business was formed in 2017. Civil society organizations are noted for their efforts in project implementation, consultation, capacity development, advocacy and awareness-raising. Private sector stakeholders have indicated their priorities for SDG implementation and are increasingly engaged in multi-stakeholder collaborations.

Academic and research institutions are supporting SDG implementation through research programs and SDG clubs have been introduced in schools. Finally, the VNR report also highlights the role of volunteers to support implementation of most goals.

GOOD PRACTICE SPOTLIGHT

The parliament in Kenya is involved in 2030 Agenda implementation. Its Parliamentary Caucus on SDGs and Business was formed in 2017, mandated to promote sustainable development and socially responsible business. It meets this mandate through activities related to legislation, resource mobilization, oversight and partnerships. The Caucus has invested in capacity development and includes eight Parliamentary Committees. An SDGs Open Day in Parliament was held in 2019 and the Caucus launched a 2019-2023 strategic plan. Parliament has also been engaged in the preparation of the 2019 SDG progress report and the 2019 HLPF.

Means of implementation

The SDGs are included in budgeting processes according to the VNR report. Sectoral policies are also submitted for consideration and financing, aligned with the SDGs. The government recognizes that resource mobilization and effective use of domestic resources are critical aspects of successful 2030 Agenda implementation, noting the need to improve domestic tax administration structures. Kenya is challenged by its re-classification as a lower middle-income country in 2014 in terms of access to concessional international public finance. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Kenya established an emergency response fund to mobilize financial resources to support its efforts. It has also been supported by international multilateral partners to put together a costed contingency plan (funded mainly by the World Bank) focused largely on the healthcare response. The VNR report highlights best practices for specific SDGs, such as efforts to scale up basic sanitation for the urban poor. A lesson shared from Kenya's experience includes ensuring that the VNR process begins early

enough and with appropriate resources to ensure participation and effective implementation.

Measurement and reporting

According to the VNR report, Kenya is well positioned to report on the indicators it has prioritized with data available for 85% of 131 indicators (though this represents only 56% of the 232 global indicators). Monitoring and reporting on the SDGs occurs through biennial progress reports prepared by government institutions. While these reports suffer from a lack of timely and disaggregated data, the national statistics office has been carrying out surveys to address data gaps, including to enhance data disaggregation. Local level governments have also been engaged to improve the availability of good quality data through the use of a technology platform to open data and provide opportunity for citizen feedback and engagement. Parliament is involved in follow-up and review as noted above. Kenya's second VNR report assessed progress made since the 2017 VNR report, including challenges and best practices.

KYRGYZ REPUBLIC

In 2020, the Kyrgyz Republic submitted its first voluntary national review (VNR) report to the United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF).

GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS

Leadership, governance and institutions

The Kyrgyz Republic uses a 'whole-of-government' approach to adapt, implement and monitor progress towards achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In December 2015, the government established the SDG Coordination Committee chaired by the Prime Minister. The Committee involves relevant ministries and agencies, the Parliament, the Office of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic, the Supreme Court of the Kyrgyz Republic, the National Bank of the Kyrgyz Republic and the National Institute for Strategic Research of the Kyrgyz Republic, with additional representatives from the United Nations Country Team, civil society and the private sector.

Stakeholder engagement

The report states that non-state actors were included in the government-led coordination mechanism for the implementation of the SDGs and the preparation of the draft VNR through a multi-stakeholder consultative process but does not indicate that a broader mechanism for stakeholder engagement has been established. Civil society organizations formed their own working groups to provide complementary input during follow-up and review processes.

POLICIES

Baseline or gap analysis

The Kyrgyz Republic undertook a gap analysis using the United Nations Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support methodology, Complexity Analysis of the SDGs Interlinkages and Rapid Integrated Assessment tools. The assessment helped identify the level of alignment between national priorities and SDG implementation and attainment on the subnational level, as well as areas that can benefit from accelerated actions. Gaps identified include a lack of sufficiently disaggregated statistical data, persistent urban-rural discrepancies, continued social and gender inequalities, insufficient capacities among central and local authorities and limited financial and human resources to work on multiple priorities simultaneously. The Rapid Integrated Assessment of 36 strategic documents found 82% alignment of the national strategic development planning with the SDGs, with full alignment observed with SDGs 1 (No poverty), 2 (Zero hunger), 3 (Good health and well-being), 5 (Gender equality), 7 (Affordable and clean energy) and 9 (Industry, innovation and infrastructure).

Incorporating the SDGs

The SDGs are incorporated into national development plans and related policies and frameworks through the 2040 National Development Strategy of the Kyrgyz Republic, the 2018-2022 'Unity, Trust, Creation' Program of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic and other programs and strategies. While the VNR report does not mention the human rights-based approach, it has a strong focus on human rights principles. Universality and planetary boundaries are not explicitly referenced. The report contains a dedicated section on the leave no one behind (LNOB) approach, which underpins the entire review.

Nationalizing the 2030 Agenda

Based on the 2030 Agenda context assessment, the working groups tasked with the VNR preparation identified SDG priority goals and targets relevant to the Kyrgyz Republic through a multi-stakeholder consultative process. Out of the 232 global indicators, 206 were considered applicable to the national context. National priorities cover all SDG areas with varying degrees of alignment with specific goals and targets. Top priority targets include resilience of the poor, agricultural productivity, knowledge and skills for sustainable development, resilience and adaptive capacity, rule of law and non-discriminatory laws and policies.

Integration and policy coherence

The VNR report covers all the SDGs except SDG 14 as the Kyrgyz Republic is landlocked. It provides a summary examination of goals, targets and indicators with limited details but does identify implementation challenges and next steps for each of the SDGs considered. The report gives equal attention to economic, social and environmental dimensions, but makes limited reference to linkages between the three dimensions. The VNR report approaches the concept of policy coherence for sustainable development as policy coherence within the country, in the context of 'whole-of-government' and 'whole-of-society' approaches. It also includes an assessment of impacts of domestic policies on eliminating statelessness on the realization of the SDGs globally. The VNR report refers to the Paris Agreement on climate change, the Convention on Biological Diversity, and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. Climate change efforts highlighted include the preparation of Nationally Determined Contributions, the Coordination Commission on Climate Change with a focus on green economy and finance mobilization through the Climate Finance Center. The VNR report does not mention the Addis Ababa Action Agenda or the Aid Effectiveness and Development Effectiveness Agendas, nor does it mention any COVID-19-related commitments.

2030 IMPLEMENTING THE 2030 AGENDA

Leave no one behind

The Kyrgyz Republic's LNOB efforts underpin the country's "people-centered strategic policy framework," which outlines the sustainable development discourse for current and future generations, prioritizing the most vulnerable groups including: disadvantaged children and families; people living with HIV/AIDS, drug addiction and mental illness; victims of violence and human trafficking; persons with disabilities; families and children returning from war and conflict zones; refugees and internally displaced persons; migrants and migrant families; convicted persons and those released from places of detention; the elderly; and women and youth living in remote rural areas. Efforts are implemented through the 2040 National Development Strategy as well as new specialized programs for specific groups, including Inclusive Education Concept and Program

2019-2023 targeting children with disabilities and 'Cash+' program to assist low-income families. The VNR report highlights that the country has eliminated statelessness and "virtually eliminated" extreme poverty (between 2013 and 2018, the level of extreme poverty fell from 2.8% to 0.6%).

Awareness raising and localization

The government has been implementing the SDG Youth Ambassadors Program, which engages in awareness-raising efforts among youth. Youth SDG forums have also helped raise awareness of the 2030 Agenda. The National Statistical Committee is implementing a communication strategy for SDG statistics. At the local level, subnational authorities played a consultative role in initial target prioritization and participated in the VNR. Workshops for local administrations during the VNR preparation process promoted the exchange of knowledge and information on SDG progress, raised awareness on the 2020 theme of the HLPF and lay the ground for additional training and capacity-building activities in sub-national administrative divisions. The government, in cooperation with donor organizations, has initiated pilot projects to integrate identified priority SDGs into local actions.

Partnership to realize the SDGs

The VNR report is vague on the precise extent of local non-state actor participation in SDG implementation. It recognizes having an inclusive and participatory VNR process as "an important lesson for the Kyrgyz Republic on how increased ownership over changes among stakeholders can result in a wider acceptance of decisions on the implementation of solutions." It mentions engagement of civil society working groups and the business community in the follow-up and review processes, and involvement of business and academia in the development and drafting of public policies through the Committee for Industry and Entrepreneurship Development under the National Council for Sustainable Development, among other initiatives.

Means of implementation

The VNR report highlights the lack of disaggregated statistical data as challenge to the 2030 Agenda implementation. It also identifies challenges for each SDG. The VNR report stresses the need for further financial, human and technical support to accelerate progress. It notes the government's plans to include key

priority SDGs and targets in national budget planning and resource mobilization strategies through investment incentives, public-private partnerships and development cooperation, among other tools.

Measurement and reporting

A statistical capacity assessment revealed that the Kyrgyz Republic is ready to report on 102 indicators, or 50% of all applicable global SDG indicators. The report recognizes the national SDG reporting platform as "an essential element of building an effective system for monitoring achievements of the SDGs." To improve data availability, the 2020-2024 program for the development of statistics provides for measures to modernize the statistical system of the Kyrgyz Republic through the digitalization and automation of the process of collecting and processing data and by developing statistics for SDG monitoring. The VNR report notes that the government plans to improve disaggregated data availability. The VNR report does not specify government plans regarding future national reporting.

LIBERIA

In 2020, Liberia submitted its first voluntary national review (VNR) report to the United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS

Leadership, governance and institutions

Liberia has a National Steering Committee, chaired by the President, that is responsible for high-level coordination and decision-making body. It is responsible for management of the country's Pro-poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development, and therefore implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Africa Agenda 2063. According to the VNR report, the government has established 12 Technical Working Groups comprised experts and specialists from government institutions and mandated to ensure participation of non-state actors in public planning. Civil society, development partners, County Development Committee Representatives and private sector stakeholders are not formally included in the working groups but play an advisory role.

Stakeholder engagement

In terms of mechanisms for ongoing stakeholder engagement, the government plans to establish a Citizens Feedback Mechanism according to the VNR report. The mechanism aims to increase involvement by citizens in overall monitoring of development projects and programs through a mechanism that will allow citizens, civil society and the media to raise feedback on the delivery of services through a systematic and technological approach. The mechanism will be available on mobile devices and the web.

In terms of consultations, the VNR report notes that significant national and sub-national consultations were planned for the VNR but that they had to be postponed because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Nevertheless, it notes that consultations occurred later in the VNR process. In addition, the VNR report outlines briefly consultations around the country's national development plan.

POLICIES

Baseline or gap analysis

The VNR report refers to plans by the government to carry out a gap analysis or baseline study to assess existing policies in relation to global and regional commitments. Through this process, the government will identify where additional progress is needed.

Incorporating the SDGs

The Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (2018-2023 national development plan) supports the country's Vision 2030 framework, developed in 2012. The national vision is aligned with the 2030 Agenda, and addresses social, economic, political, environmental, cultural and technological aspects of sustainable development. The national development plan connects the SDGs to 16 development outcomes. In terms of the transformative principles of the 2030 Agenda, the report mentions only efforts to leave no one behind (LNOB) and does not refer to universality, planetary boundaries or inter-generational responsibility or equity. While the human rights-based nature of the agenda is not explicitly stated, the VNR report does point to efforts by the government to protect human rights.

Nationalizing the 2030 Agenda

As noted, the national development plan includes 16 development outcomes that pertain to the areas of social outcomes, economy, peace and governance. The Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development includes 140 national targets and 140 national indicators, linked to the 2030 Agenda (and Africa Agenda 2063).

Integration and policy coherence

Liberia's VNR report includes a detailed examination of all 17 SDGs with references to the applicable linkages between economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. Overall however, this is a greater focus on social dimensions. Policy coherence

for sustainable development is not mentioned though the report does refer to the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and relevant international frameworks related to aid and development effectiveness, notably the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation.

IMPLEMENTING THE 2030 AGENDA

Leave no one behind
The VNR report identifies poor people, children, youth, elders, women, girls, people with disabilities, ethnic and religious minorities, people living with HIV, Ebola virus disease survivors and LGBTI individuals as at risk of being left behind. Under the country's national development plan, efforts to LNOB focus on ensuring that development gains are shared equitably. This includes through decentralized government services, land reforms, involvement of local communities and "addressing peace and reconciliation needs of those who feel alienated from the development pathway" (p. 3). The VNR report highlights universal programs such as social protection investments. It also refers to specific initiatives for children and religious and ethnic groups though information is not presented for all groups identified as at risk of being left behind. In terms of gender equality, the VNR report refers to provisions in the national development plan and efforts to empower women.

Awareness raising and localization
Awareness-raising activities were carried out at national and sub-national levels with SDGs teams deployed across the country. Teams were responsible for organizing radio talk shows geared at reaching audiences in major cities and rural areas. Information was made available in English but also in local dialects. Town hall meetings were also conducted to reach diverse stakeholders. In terms of engagement by local government, the VNR process anticipated a role of County Development Steering Committees to support consultations (though these were cancelled in light of the COVID-19 pandemic). According to the VNR report, the government recognizes the need to strengthen monitoring and evaluation of service delivery at the local level and increase local community participation in decision-making and implementation of the Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (and by extension, the 2030 Agenda).

Partnership to realize the SDGs
The VNR report tends to highlight how the government plans to involve non-state actors rather than actual activities carried out by them. It notes feedback mechanisms for civil society organizations and others and emphasizes the potential of public-private partnerships. However, it does no provide significant examples of actions carried out by these stakeholders to specifically implement the 2030 Agenda.

Means of implementation
Information on good practice and lessons learned is provided in the VNR report. With respect to the latter, it notes the importance of targeted efforts to address inequality and ensuring that new policies do not recreate past economic and political structures that contribute to marginalization. However, the government faces capacity challenges in terms of limited fiscal space, low ability to organize information on service delivery to inform decision-making, and weak institutional knowledge and knowledge retention. The VNR report notes efforts related to balancing budgets and aligning spending with available revenue and explicitly states the cost of the current national plan, which is directly connected to the SDGs. The government has developed a strategy for domestic resource mobilization and also notes past reliance on donor assistance and borrowing to address financing gaps. The country is currently facing donor fatigue (particularly since efforts to fight the Ebola pandemic) and aid flows have declined. The VNR report recognizes that the COVID-19 pandemic as a major challenge that will further exacerbate existing issues related to poverty and inequality, among other areas of sustainable development. It notes the need to reassess the impacts of the crisis on the country's Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (2018-2023).

Measurement and reporting
The VNR report does not provide information on overall data availability or the status of disaggregated data. It does however point to efforts to improve data availability, namely investments in statistical institutions' technical capacities and infrastructure to support data collection at national and sub-national levels. The VNR report notes that a draft "year one" report was prepared on 2030 Agenda implementation. While the VNR report does not indicate reporting timelines, it notes that cabinet is responsible for monitoring progress on goals through periodic assessments of the country's national development plan.

LIBYA

In 2020, Libya submitted its first voluntary national review (VNR) report to the United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS

Leadership, governance and institutions

The Government set up a National Commission for Sustainable Development chaired by the Director General of the Ministry for Planning. The commission includes experts and specialists in different fields of development, and a working group for each SDG was put in place. Each working group includes experts with the task of preparing annual reports on the implementation of the SDGs. The commission consists of members from the national statistical bureau. There is a plan to make this commission an inter-ministerial commission chaired by the prime minister in the near future. The VNR report also mentions consultative bodies that include representatives from civil society organizations, the private sector, academia, people with disabilities, women and youth.

Stakeholder engagement

The VNR report mentions that a roadmap for VNR preparation was put in place, which included the organization of a series of meetings and workshops about Libya's national priorities. These discussions led to the selection of 10 SDGs to be covered in the 2020 VNR, and a working group was established for each SDG. The different working groups interact within the frame of the Forum for Sustainable Development, which is a process for ongoing stakeholder engagement. It intends to provide a platform for dialogue, consultation, exchange of experiences, coordination of efforts, and enhanced cooperation between the public sector, the private sector and civil society.

POLICIES

Baseline or gap analysis

According to the VNR report, no baseline or gap analysis survey was conducted on the SDGs. However, the report provides data on different indicators in comparison to different baselines by using sources from different governmental bureaus.

Incorporating the SDGs

As stated in the VNR report, Libya considers that achieving sustainable development goals requires their incorporation into public policies. For this reason, the Ministry of Planning, within the framework of achieving the 2030 Agenda, adopted a three-year development plan for all sectors of the state for the 2020-2022 period. The plan highlights the need to integrate the SDGs into the sectoral strategies in the Libyan state.

Integration and policy coherence

The VNR report assesses the progress on a limited set of country-selected SDGs examined; specifically, SDG 3 (Good health and well-being), SDG 4 (Quality education), SDG 5 (Gender equality), SDG 6 (Clean water and sanitation), SDG 7 (Affordable and clean energy), SDG 8 (Decent work and economic growth), SDG 11 (Sustainable cities and communities), SDG 13 (Climate action), SDG 16 (Peace, justice and strong institutions), and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the goals). The VNR report includes a detailed examination of those goals, mentions targets and indicators, and adopts a balanced multi-sectoral approach, taking the social, economic and environmental dimensions into account. Moreover, the VNR report mentions that COVID-19 will have huge implications on Libya's economy and thus will cause additional challenges to the SDGs implementation. However, the report does not provide mitigation strategies, nor it describes efforts to reduce the impacts of COVID-19 on those at risk of being left behind.

The VNR report mentions that Libya's current efforts in terms of ensuring policy coherence will not lead to a national vision on the SDGs due to a lack of binding measures that oblige the different ministries to consider the 2030 Agenda as a framework. Moreover, there are challenges related to lack of data and statistics.

IMPLEMENTING THE 2030 AGENDA

(2030)

Leave no one behind

The VNR report mentions that the main principle of the 2030 Agenda is "Leave no one behind" and thus considers that development efforts should be inclusive and focus on women, people with disabilities, and people leaving in marginalized areas.

Awareness raising and localization

The VNR report refers to the establishment of the Libyan Forum for Sustainable Development, which counts with the involvement of civilians of varying backgrounds and capabilities. The Forum has pledged to continue using awareness campaigns on different media platforms and to conduct workshops to further involve the community.

Partnership to realize the SDGs

The VNR report considers that one of the major challenges for development in Libya is the weak private sector and the absence of a legal and legislative framework that enables an effective and efficient role for business in development. The VNR report mentions that Libya needs to develop partnerships at national, regional and global levels in order to ensure coherence and join efforts with other development partners to address global challenges.

Measurement and reporting

According to the VNR report, there is a need to further develop the organizational capacity of the national statistical system.

MALAWI

In 2020, Malawi submitted its first voluntary national review (VNR) report to the United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS

Leadership, governance and institutions
Leadership for 2030 Agenda implementation resides a National Planning Commission, working in close collaboration with the Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development. In terms of institutional mechanisms, the VNR report points to the establishment of 16 Sector Working Groups, composed of specific Technical Working Groups that develop reports after examining specific expert areas. In addition, a National Civil Society Taskforce on SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals) exists and includes 530 members. This group engages with government mechanisms and influences policy decisions through research, service delivery and advocacy.

Stakeholder engagement
The VNR report notes the need for a specific process and approach to improve stakeholder engagement in 2030 Agenda implementation. Nevertheless, consultations occurred with respect to the selection of national priorities and on the VNR according to the report. A National Steering Committee and a Core Technical Committee were established to oversee the VNR. The National Steering Committee included representatives from government institutions, development partners and civil society organizations. The COVID-19 pandemic severely impacted consultation and engagement though some face-to-face meetings occurred before preventative measures set in. VNR report validation was carried out virtually.

POLICIES

Baseline or gap analysis
The 2020 VNR report is built on an assessment conducted in 2016 meant to develop baselines and the country's first national progress reporting in 2018. The VNR report does not provide specific details on these assessments, and does not show gaps that exist in the goal-by-goal analysis presented.

Incorporating the SDGs
According to the VNR report, Malawi is implementing the 2030 Agenda through its medium-term national development strategy called the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy III. The VNR report includes specific mention of the universal, human rights-based nature of the 2030 Agenda. There is a dedicated chapter on efforts to leave no one behind (LNOB).

Nationalizing the 2030 Agenda
Malawi has identified national priorities for 2030 Agenda implementation. These include environment, education, economy, health, and inequality. Moreover, the VNR report refers to the existence of national targets and indicators. The latter have been included as localized proxy indicators and reflect Malawi's efforts to contribute to global targets through national indicators.

Integration and policy coherence
The VNR report includes a detailed assessment of all 17 SDGs. While it covers all dimensions of sustainable development and makes linkages between them in the analysis of specific goals, overall it has a stronger focus on social dimensions. The VNR report mentions the importance of policy and institutional coherence, noting plans to use a Macroeconomic Dashboard to promote policy coherence and coordination. The VNR report refers to climate change but not the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. It does, however, mention the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the monitoring framework for aid and development effectiveness established in Busan in 2011.

IMPLEMENTING THE 2030 AGENDA

Leave no one behind
According to the VNR report, women, the youth, the elderly, persons leaving with disabilities and vulnerable children are groups at risk of being left behind and therefore "at the heart" of 2030 Agenda implementation efforts. Efforts appear to be informed by existing data, however

the status of gender disaggregated data is unclear from the VNR report as information is not consistently presented. In terms of efforts to leave no one behind (LNOB), the VNR report includes specific commitments, laws and policies, but not an overarching approach to translate the LNOB commitment into guidance for policies, goals, targets, etc. It should also be noted that the VNR report refers to collaboration with non-state actors to develop a Human Rights Action Plan that will include reviews of existing laws on same sex relationships and provisions to support LGBTI heal care services.

Awareness raising and localization

To raise awareness of the SDGs, the government carried out workshops, training programmes, institutional capacity building and integration into the tertiary curriculum and decision-making processes. The role of non-state actors in raising awareness is also noted. In terms of localization, the VNR report notes that the SDGs have been integrated into planning systems and processes at national, regional and local levels. Moreover, they were translated into three Malawian local languages with information provided to local councils and the Area and Village Development Committees. The VNR report also lays out numerous efforts related to rural development and decentralization in support of the national development plan and the SDGs. The VNR report includes a specific sub-chapter on localization.

Partnership to realize the SDGs

The VNR report highlights the role of the National Civil Society Taskforce on the SDGs, noting the role of its members in 2030 Agenda implementation. The Taskforce includes civil society, trade unions, youth organizations, disability groups, development partners (ex-officio member) and international organizations (ex-officio members). These organizations are supporting implementation through research, service delivery, advocacy and citizen engagement to promote accountability. While the VNR report does not provide detailed information on a range of activities for the private sector and academia, it does note that they are involved in annual SDGs progress reporting. The VNR report also mentions the role of parliament (discussed below) and the vital role of volunteers in active 2030 Agenda implementation, often acting as a bridge between formal and informal provision of public services.

Measurement and reporting

The VNR report provides information on lessons learned and challenges in 2030 Agenda implementation. With respect to lessons learned, it outlines experiences related to improving the VNR process, stakeholder engagement

and ensuring available data. Challenges for Malawi include the need to improve inclusion of the SDGs in national budgets, transparency and effective use of resources, corruption, awareness raising, localization, weak monitoring, evaluation and data systems and limited private sector activities. The VNR report also notes illicit financial flows as a challenge. In terms of financing implementation, the government worked with the United Nations Development Programme to undertake a Development Finance Assessment that identified opportunities from public, private and development cooperation financing. The VNR report recognizes that there is now an additional need to raise financial resources to respond to COVID-19 as well as accelerate progress on the SDGs.

Measurement and reporting

As of May 2020, Malawi makes use of 212 indicators to track and report on SDG progress. The VNR report has some level of data disaggregation but it is recognized that there is a lack of disaggregated data for most of the indicators. The National Statistical Office has developed a plan to improve disaggregated data and information collection at national and local levels. In terms of reporting, the national statistics office supports production of annual SDG Progress Reports. According to the VNR report, non-state actors are engaged in the reporting process. Moreover, parliament is highlighted for promoting transparency in the SDGs implementation process and advocating for constant tracking of the progress. Finally, the National Audit office undertook an audit to assess the government's capacity to implement the 2030 Agenda.

GOOD PRACTICE SPOTLIGHT

Malawi's VNR report outlined efforts towards annual national reporting on the 2030 Agenda as well as the role of parliament and the national auditing institution in follow-up and review.

Civil society validity check

Malawi's country profile has been reviewed by a representative of the Council for Non-Governmental Organizations in Malawi (CONGOMA).

MICRONESIA

In 2020, the Federated States of Micronesia (Micronesia) submitted its first voluntary national review (VNR) report to the United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS

Leadership, governance and institutions
According to the VNR report, an SDG (Sustainable Development Goal) Working Group was established in 2016, responsible for internal coordination. The Working Group includes government institutions, which are responsible for obtaining inputs from civil society and the private sector. State Focal Points were established as part of the Working Group.

Stakeholder engagement
The VNR report points to stakeholder engagement in the prioritization of SDG indicators as well as specific forums held to consult stakeholders on the education and health sectors. With respect to the VNR report, representatives from government institutions, the private sector, civil society and other development partners assisted in the drafting of specific sections. Consultations were also held in January and February of 2020, though the COVID-19 pandemic impacted planned consultations for March to July 2020. The VNR report includes an annex of institutions and organizations that contributed to the VNR.

POLICIES

Baseline or gap analysis
In 2017, the government carried out a review of data availability and use in relation to the SDGs. The VNR report also includes an annex with a baseline assessment for SDGs 1 through 5.

Incorporating the SDGs
Micronesia's Strategic Development Plan (2004-2023) serves as the national strategy for sustainable economic growth and self-reliance. To incorporate the SDGs into this strategy, the VNR report notes the

selection of 89 SDG targets, with an accompanying 90 SDG indicators. The VNR report also points to alignment between specific national strategy and the SDGs such as those relating to infrastructure, health, education and statistics. The VNR report refers to the principle of leaving no one behind and recognizes the need to protect the Micronesian way of life for future generations.

Nationalizing the 2030 Agenda
The VNR report mentions priority targets under each SDG. Nevertheless, the national strategy prioritizes sustainable development through health, education, agriculture, fisheries, private sector development, transportation, communication and energy. National targets and indicators have been identified with the country's SDG Dashboard showcasing 90 targets and 89 indicators.

Integration and policy coherence
The VNR report provides a detailed examination of all SDGs. While all dimensions of sustainable development are examined, the report has a greater focus on the social and makes limited references to the linkages between dimensions in the goal-by-goal analysis. The VNR report makes reference to environment-related international agreements as well as the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.

IMPLEMENTING THE 2030 AGENDA

Leave no one behind
The VNR report does not provide information on the status of disaggregated data to leave no one behind (LNOB) and gender disaggregated data is not widely available in the report. Nevertheless, poor households, children, adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating women and the elderly are identified as at risk of being left behind. The VNR report emphasizes holistic and

integrated approaches to tackling challenges across national priority but does not provide significant details on how LNOB is integrated into national approaches overall. Nevertheless, the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance Program is highlighted as an example of how the government works to support vulnerable populations when they experience shocks. The VNR report provides specific examples of efforts to support vulnerable populations in the goal-by-goal analysis.

Awareness raising and localization

According to the VNR report, the government held an SDG consultation and localization workshop to raise awareness of the 2030 Agenda, prior to the VNR. This workshop was also meant to support localization through a review of the relevancy of specific SDGs to local contexts. The VNR report notes a commitment to integrate the SDGs into state level plans. Efforts by regional governments are also highlighted in the VNR report, notably in terms of promoting workforce participation.

Partnership to realize the SDGs

The VNR report provides examples of specific multi-stakeholder partnerships involving civil society and the private sector. It also showcased the 2019 independent audit of Micronesia's preparedness to implement the SDGs. In terms of support from development partners, the VNR report points to more support in the areas of social protection and preparedness and recovery particularly with respect to health, sanitation, waste management, education, gender and water and food security.

Means of implementation

Challenges related to 2030 Agenda implementation are listed under specific SDGs. In addition, the VNR report noted systemic issues that serve as significant challenges – climate change, overfishing, vulnerability to natural disasters and sudden shocks, notably COVID-19. Data challenges are also listed, including the need to improve capacities in this area. Micronesia recognizes the need to strengthen resource mobilization and integrate the SDGs into the annual budget process. Sources of finance include domestic resources, official development assistance, technical assistance and capacity building, technology transfer, taxes and remittances. The VNR report also points to specific projects and support in the context of South-South cooperation.

Measurement and reporting

While the VNR report mentions challenges in relation to data availability, it does not provide an overview of the current status of available indicators. Nevertheless, it notes challenges related to data use, coordination and quality. In addition the SDG Dashboard noted above, the VNR report notes that the government has committed to include the economy related SDG indicators in its annual economic and fiscal update.

MOLDOVA

In 2020, Moldova submitted its first voluntary national review (VNR) report to the United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS

Leadership, governance and institutions

In the first part of 2016, to create an appropriate institutional framework and ensure a participatory and transparent process to adapt the SDGs and implement them at the national level, the Government of Moldova established a National Coordination Council for Sustainable Development, headed by the country President, and including representatives of governmental bodies, the Academia, the National Confederation of Employees, and trade unions. The Council's work is supported by an Inter-Ministerial Committee for Strategic Planning, the State Chancellery, and five multi-stakeholder working groups aligning their work with one of the 2030 Agenda 5Ps.

Stakeholder engagement

The process of engaging stakeholders is not presented in the VNR. However, to ensure a participatory and inclusive VNR drafting, a Joint Steering Committee was established, including representatives from the Presidency, Parliament, Government, central and local public authorities, civil society, the private sector, press, and academia. Given COVID-19 impacts, their meeting, and a public consultation session of the draft Report with all development partners went virtual.

Similarly, a general explanation of stakeholders' involvement in national priorities definition explains that those were set throughout a multi-stakeholder process, including national and local public authorities, the private sector, civil society, academia, and development partners.

Besides, the National Youth Council of Moldova prepared a 'Complementary Report' presenting youth perspectives on the SDGs implementation.

POLICIES

Baseline or gap analysis

The Republic of Moldova conducted a Rapid Integrated Assessment of its national policy documents to identify gaps and weaknesses within the national policy framework regarding the SDGs. The exercise analyzed 169 SDG targets, putting particular focus on 126 quantitative targets.

The results demonstrated that the national policy agenda is only partially aligned to the SDGs. Only 11% of the targets were aligned to the national policy papers. In comparison, 57% of the targets are partially aligned to the Republic of Moldova's policy papers, and national policy papers do not reflect about one-third of the SDG targets at all.

Also, many gaps were identified in areas such as access to health services, education, gender wages, access to ICT, street infrastructure, inter-urban public transport, housing, shortage of institutional environmental capacities, and funding. Even when the impact of COVID-19 has not been estimated, the VNR announces that it will be negative and could lead to increased inequalities.

Incorporating the SDGs

In September 2017, the Republic of Moldova's Government initiated the development of a new long-term national strategy by 2030: the National Development Strategy 'Moldova 2030', which is currently in the process of being approved. This new national development strategy was built, to a great extent, around the 2030 Agenda targets and goals. Once adopted, '*Moldova 2030*' will be translated into sectoral strategies to be better implemented, monitored, and evaluated.

The human rights-based approach is not considered in Moldova's VNR, but it has a strong human rights focus, including a sub-chapter on human rights and access to

justice. The report does not cover planetary boundaries nor inter-generational responsibility. Universality and Leave no one behind are explicitly mentioned. A special chapter is dedicated to the last, highlighting that assessing the impact of the COVID-19 crisis is critical for informing and tailoring governments and partners' responses to recover while no one is left behind.

Nationalizing the 2030 Agenda

The report indicates that Moldova's National Development Plan includes four priorities: sustainable and inclusive economy, strong human and social capital, honest and efficient institutions, and a healthy environment. The *National Development Strategy 'Moldova 2030'* complements them establishing focus areas: well-being and human rights, education and health, promoting a circular economy, environmental protection, and building an inclusive society. The SDGs targets and indicators were adjusted to the Moldova specifics in a multi-stakeholder process involving national and local public authorities, the private sector, civil society, academia, and development partners.

Moldova was one of the first countries to nationalize (in 2016) and then revise (in 2019) a national set of indicators. After the revision, 213 of the 232 individual global indicators were considered relevant for the country and were adjusted, broken down, and complemented with national proxies. As a result, 338 relevant indicators were obtained, 121 of which are global indicators, 53 are adjusted global indicators, 77 are global broken-down indicators, and 87 are national proxies.

Integration and policy coherence

The report is structured around the '5Ps', providing a detailed analysis of each of them that 'replicates' the SDGs. The chapter 'People' considers no poverty, health and well-being, quality education, and gender equality. The chapter 'Prosperity' deals with clean and affordable energy, decent jobs and economic growth, industry, innovation and infrastructure, reduced inequality, sustainable cities and communities. The chapter 'Planet' addresses clean water and hygiene, responsible consumption and production, and climate action. The chapter 'Peace' refers to security, the rule of law, human rights, access to justice, good governance, and citizen participation. Finally, the chapter 'Partnerships' covers finances, technologies, capacity building, trade, systemic

problems and institutional coherence, multilateral partnerships, and data monitoring.

The VNR provides equal attention to the three sustainable development dimensions. Policy coherence is considered only within the country. The only international document related to the 2030 Agenda explicitly mentioned are those linked to the Developmental Effectiveness Agenda: the Paris Declaration, the Accra Agenda for Action, the Busan Commitments, and the Mexico Communiqué.

IMPLEMENTING THE 2030 AGENDA

Leave no one behind

The VNR identifies the rural population, children and youth, women, people with disabilities, Roma people, migrants, and the elderly as groups at risk of being left behind. The status of data disaggregation availability should be reinforced to support those groups effectively. The report includes the Government's commitment to increasing investment in developing a national system for production, collection, and qualitative data disaggregation.

Moldova uses new and existing specialized and universal programs to support vulnerable populations, including multifunctional social service networks helping to improve disadvantaged groups' access to needs-based services and cash transfer programs to fight poverty, among others. Gender equality-oriented actions are extensively described, and gender-disaggregated data is available most of the time. Government actions in response to the COVID-19 pandemics are explicitly linked to the most vulnerable protection. The VNR identifies inequalities in areas such as education, health, and income. However, efforts to reduce domestic inequalities are not clearly articulated in the report.

Awareness raising and localization

The report does not provide information on awareness-raising efforts. Still, it shows that an SDGs localization process is advancing through policies supporting local public administration of Moldova in implementing the National Development Strategy for 2016-2020 through an integrated and sustainable urban development for 2017-2019 project. Besides, the VNR reports the creation

of 32 local action groups representing 263 first-level administrative and territorial units, focused on local development cooperation.

In April 2020, central and local authorities met to discuss measures to be taken at the local level to prevent COVID-19 from spreading.

Partnership to realize the SDGs

Civil society, the private sector, academia, trade unions, and youth are engaged in SDGs national implementation activities. The VNR underlines the relevance of youth's role play, helping to envision a path to the future development of Moldova. The parliament was also involved in 38 South-South and Triangular Cooperation activities in 2016, including actions to reinforce parliamentarian publication and dissemination of information through websites and the creation of cooperation networks and opportunities.

The report also considers partnerships with the so-called 'development partners,' asking them 'to increase as much as possible the predictability of assistance and the availability of development partners to support the Republic of Moldova's national development agenda and implementation of the SDGs.' (p. 151).

Finally, United Nations agencies in the country provided analytical and informational support to the VNR building process.

Means of implementation

The report refers to technology, capacity development, systemic issues, trade, and national and international financing as a means of national SDGs implementation.

However, there is no cost estimation of the 2030 Agenda implementation. It is specified that the policies oriented to advancing the national development, including the SDGs, will be implemented within budgetary allocations. Considering such restriction is important to highlight that Moldova's Government improved its mechanism for coordinating foreign aid by implementing the regulation on the institutional framework mechanism for coordinating and managing foreign aid, and establishing sectoral councils in the field of external assistance.

Measurement and reporting

The Government led a multi-stakeholder process in 2018 with the overall objective of assessing data availability and institutional modernization capacity needs to implement the 2030 Development Agenda. As a result, a set of recommendations to achieve data revolution was set, including increasing the number of official statistics data producers and providing education and data literacy.

The VNR notes that, at present, data are at least partially produced for 77% of the national indicators: 46.4% are fully available. In comparison, 30.8% are partially functional, with the possibility to quickly estimate the missing elements. The VNR also notes a shortage of disaggregated data compromising the SDG implementation monitoring and evaluation system for over 30% of the indicators.

Non-traditional data sources are used across the report: when analyzing air pollution, the Copernicus Sentinel-satellite data is used. Besides, the VNR takes data from the World Bank poverty & equity data portal, the UNDP, UNSTATS, and the OECD Social Institutions and Gender Index.

MOROCCO

In 2020, Morocco submitted its second voluntary national review (VNR) report to the United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF). The first VNR report was introduced in 2016.

GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS

Leadership, governance and institutions

The government set up a National Commission for Sustainable Development chaired by the Head of Government in July 2019. The High Commission for Planning, which is an independent national institution in charge of statistics, has been tasked with preparing annual reports on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Commission includes representatives of the government, Parliament, the Court of Auditors, public institutions, the Economic, Social and Environmental Council, local governments, academia, media and civil society.

Stakeholder engagement

In June 2019, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the High Commission for Planning organized a national consultation to take stock of the progress of the SDGs and prepare Morocco's participation in the HLPF with support from the United Nations system in Morocco. The consultations included diverse stakeholders and was an opportunity for discussion of achievements by stakeholders and reflections on the progress of SDGs implementation. Along with their participation in national, regional and thematic consultations, stakeholders contributed to the VNR through their own implementation efforts that further strengthened the process of mobilization and collective ownership of the 2030 Agenda.

POLICIES

Baseline or gap analysis

The VNR report notes that an evaluation of the statistical system was carried out to assess data availability with availability overall resting at 42% of the 244 global indicators. It provides data on SDG indicators in comparison to a baseline. For example, the progress on poverty is compared between 2007 and 2018 while the progress on malnutrition indicators for children under 5 is shown through a comparison between 2003 indicators and those of 2018. Yet, it should be noted that baselines are not fully explained in the VNR report or referred to adequately in both of these instances. Data for 2018, were produced by the High Commission for Planning and the reports by concerned government departments. In terms of policies, Morocco also carried out a Rapid Integrated Assessment to examine existing policies and priorities vis-à-vis SDG targets.

Incorporating the SDGs

According to the VNR report, Morocco considers the Agenda 2030 for SDGs as a global development framework which overlaps with Moroccans' aspirations. The country's national sustainable development strategy integrates most SDG targets. The VNR report showed that institutional actors have made reference to the 2030 Agenda framework and aligned their programs and strategies in relation to the SDGs. The VNR report refers only to the 2030 Agenda principle of leaving no one behind.

Nationalizing the 2030 Agenda

The Rapid Integrated Assessment supported the identification of priorities and an overall assessment of the level of integration of the SDG targets, which in turn helped identify accelerator targets and an approximate correspondence between the SDGs and the National Strategy for Sustainable Development. The VNR report mentions a number of specific national priorities including those related to poverty reduction, improving food security, economic empowerment of women, housing and environmental sustainability.

Integration and policy coherence

The 2020 VNR report assesses progress on all 17

SDGs and adapts a balanced multi-sectoral approach taking social, economic and environmental dimensions into account. The VNR report notes the importance of consolidated public policies to ensure policy coherence and efficient SDG implementation. While the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction are explicitly considered and linked with the SDGs, the Convention on Biological Diversity and frameworks related to aid and development effectiveness are not. The VNR report contains information on the government's actions to face the COVID-19 pandemic however they are not linked with the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. Nevertheless, the VNR report proposes different scenarios and mitigating strategies in relation to the COVID-19 response.

(2030) IMPLEMENTING THE 2030 AGENDA

Leave no one behind
Efforts to leave no one behind are considered across the VNR report. The groups at risk of being left behind are identified as women, people with disabilities and children. The VNR report explicitly notes that to mitigate the social effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, allowances have been granted monthly to employees and households working in the informal sector. Specific measures have also been taken, either directly or through the support of civil society associations, in favor of addressing the needs of street children, people with disabilities, the elderly and women.

Awareness raising and localization
There are many references in the VNR report to awareness-raising activities, including the organization of three regional consultations between 2017 and 2019, in collaboration with the Wilayas and the regional councils, in partnership with the United Nations

Population Fund. The consultations aimed to raise awareness among stakeholders about the SDGs and to contextualize the goals at the territorial level. They highlighted the need to set up regional statistical databases.

Partnership to realize the SDGs
Civil society organizations, the private sector, and the Parliament have developed activities to implement the SDGs nationally. Multi-stakeholder partnerships are considered as critical to reaching the SDGs. However, the approach to partnerships focuses on national stakeholders, not referring to priority areas for external development partners' support.

Means of implementation
The VNR report refers only to the mobilization of internal funding for 2030 Agenda implementation mentioning that the proportion of government revenue in GDP stabilized around 21% before rising to 22% in 2019. Concerning technology and innovation, the VNR report mentions that partnerships that were created in order to develop capacities in Morocco. The VNR report also mentions the trade agreements signed by Morocco in order to enhance exchange with southern countries, and also indicates that public-private partnerships are an important step for the implementation of SDGs.

Measurement and reporting
The VNR report mentions that there is a need to further develop the organizational capacity of the national statistical system. To consolidate the performance and strengthen the capacity of its national statistical system, Morocco has drafted a new law (currently in the process of approval) in accordance with the fundamental principles of official statistics adopted by the United Nations. The Commission has mandated that reporting on the SDGs will be annual. A SDG monitoring and support committee was set up for this and is chaired by the services of the Head of Government.

MOZAMBIQUE

In 2020, Mozambique submitted its first voluntary national review (VNR) report to the United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS

Leadership, governance and institutions

Leadership for 2030 Agenda implementation relies on multiple cabinet ministers. The SDG (Sustainable Development Goals) National Reference Group, created in 2017, coordinates implementation and promotes engagement by stakeholders. It includes representatives from different levels of government, civil society, academic institutions, the private sector, cooperation partners, parliamentarians, the National Association of Mozambican Municipalities, the African Peer Review Mechanism and individuals.

Stakeholder engagement

The VNR report does not lay out a specific mechanism for broader stakeholder engagement beyond the governance mechanism noted above and consultations. However, it does point to participatory processes for the development of national and sectoral plans that include civil society, experts and development partners. One specific example of such engagement refers to a civil society platform and to a global network that facilitates partnerships between the government and the private sector. With respect to the VNR, non-state actors were engaged through data collection and consultations with the first draft of the report circulated for validation. Civil society organizations also carried out provincial workshops.

POLICIES

Baseline or gap analysis

The VNR report presents an assessment of Mozambique drawing on the United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network's SDG Index. Moreover, in developing national indicators, the VNR report notes the use of an in-depth analysis of sectoral programs and targets. In 2016, the government also examined existing data to support monitoring efforts, concluding that 74% of the global SDG indicators aligned with the government's 2015-2019 five-year plan. The VNR report presents gaps and progress for specific SDGs based on the assessments carried out.

Incorporating the SDGs

Mozambique's Government Five-Year Programme incorporates the 2030 Agenda. The 2015-2019 program accounted for all three dimensions of sustainable development. The National Framework of SDG Indicators adopted in 2020 is aligned with the country's subsequent five-year program for 2020-2024. The VNR report includes a chapter on efforts to leave no one behind (LNOB) and recognizes that the 2030 Agenda includes a commitment to responsibility to future generations. While the human rights-based approach is not explicitly mentioned, the report includes references to human rights.

Nationalizing the 2030 Agenda

According to the VNR report, Mozambique's national priorities pertain to 1) developing human capital and social justice, 2) economic growth, productivity and job creation and 3) strengthening natural resource management and the environment. These priorities are outlined in the government's five year -plan. In addition, the VNR report presents Mozambique's National Framework of SDG Indicators. Government institutions are responsible for specific targets in the five-year program.

Integration and policy coherence

The VNR report presents a detailed examination of all 17 SDGs with equal attention to all dimensions of sustainable development and applicable references between them in the goal-by-goal analysis. It refers to policy coherence and mechanisms and approaches to improve it. Moreover, the report refers to a range of international agreements related to climate change, the environment and financing for development as part of 2030 Agenda implementation efforts.

2030 IMPLEMENTING THE 2030 AGENDA

Leave no one behind

The VNR report indicates that people in situations of extreme poverty, children in a difficult situations, the elderly, people with disabilities and people with chronic and degenerative diseases are at risk of being left behind. To support these groups, the VNR report notes the existence of a social protection system and in particular the National Basic Social Security Strategy (2016-2024).

Awareness raising and localization

The VNR report does not include information on awareness-raising activities. Rather, it mentions that the VNR showed a lack of popular knowledge on the 2030 Agenda, noting the need for urgent attention to raise awareness. In terms of localization, the national government has provided guidance to provinces and districts for planning, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation to integrate the SDGs. The VNR notes the role of provincial parliaments to ensure that SDG indicators and targets are reflected in strategies, plans and budgets. The National Association of Mozambican Municipalities has been supporting local authorities to integrate the SDGs into their activities though work is still needed to properly integrate the 2030 Agenda into plans.

Partnership to realize the SDGs

The VNR report highlights the role of civil society in supporting VNR consultations, advocacy, awareness raising and collaboration in support of localization and monitoring. The VNR report also mentions civil society reporting on progress and their efforts to capture citizens' perceptions on SDG progress. With respect to the private sector, the VNR report pointed to the 2019 Mozambique Economic and Social Forum which included a focus on the SDGs as a means to drive accelerated, inclusive and sustainable economic growth. The VNR report also notes support from the United Nations and civil society in carrying out the VNR.

Means of implementation

The VNR report points to a number of systemic issues impacting the realization of the 2030 Agenda including security, climate change, pandemics and human and drug trafficking. For Mozambique, it notes the critical importance of domestic resource mobilization to implement the agenda with a particular focus on increasing tax revenues. The VNR report also notes the role of official development assistance and efforts to improve coordination and monitoring of external support. In terms of efforts needed going forward, the VNR report points to improving overall conditions in the country, implementation tools, mobilization of funding and strengthening partnerships. The VNR report also noted the importance of coordination around data collection and analysis with non-state actors as a challenge to address going forward.

Measurement and reporting

According to the VNR report, 74% of the global SDG indicators aligned with the government's 2015-2019 five-year plan. Of these, 38% were available and regularly monitored. Twelve percent were partially collected with 24% not collected. Noting that efforts to LNOB require more disaggregated data, there is a need for better coordination between official and unofficial data producers to address this issue, given that much data is produced in the country. The VNR report does not provide information on national reporting processes.

NEPAL

In 2020, Nepal submitted its second voluntary national review (VNR) report to the United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF). Its first presentation was in 2017.

⚙ GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS

Leadership, governance and institutions

According to the VNR report, Nepal's Federal Parliament has a Sustainable Development and Good Governance Committee, which counts with the participation of all the main political parties. In addition, at the apex level, a Steering Committee for the implementation and monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) was established under the leadership of the Prime Minister. Moreover, there is an SDG Implementation and Monitoring Committee, which is headed by the vice-chair of the National Planning Commission (NPC). Apart from this tripartite governance mechanism, SDGs Implementation and Monitoring Thematic Committees exist. While Nepal's 2017 VNR report and a 2020 civil society report mentioned nine thematic committees, a representative from another civil society organization referred to the existence of eight of such committees. However, the 2020 VNR report mentions only one SDG Implementation and Monitoring Committee, which counts with representatives from the private sector and has the president of Nepal's National NGO Federation among its members.

Stakeholder engagement

The VNR report is vague on the extension of stakeholder engagement towards the SDGs. Although it mentions that efforts are in place to bring different stakeholders onboard in the implementation of the SDGs, it also recognizes that the multi-stakeholder partnership currently in place could be further enhanced and synchronized. With regards to the definition of national priorities, the VNR report mentions that a report on the SDGs Status and Roadmap (2016-2030) was prepared in consultation with stakeholders. However, according to a representative of a civil society organization, this is only partially true. The VNR report also refers to a needs assessment of SDGs that covered public and private sectors, cooperatives and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). For the preparation of the VNR, several consultations were carried out (including in a virtual setting due to the COVID-19 pandemic) with different stakeholders. Moreover, publications and recommendations from civil society (including non-governmental organizations and Dalit) were considered in the VNR report's literature review. On behalf of Nepal SDGs Forum, the NGO Federation of Nepal prepared a civil society report with the subheading "CSOs' Voluntary National Review 2020." In addition, through the Voluntary Peoples Review process, SDGs National Network Nepal prepared the Civil Spotlight Report on the SDGs in Nepal 2020.

📑 POLICIES

Baseline or gap analysis

The VNR report refers to a baseline data of the SDGs for 2015, an SDGs Progress Report (2016-2019), and an SDGs Status and Roadmap (2016-2030). This roadmap comprised baseline data and four milestones for the years 2019, 2022, 2025 and 2030. It identified 494 indicators, including 257 local indicators. Information on baseline data is also shown under each one of the SDGs in the VNR's report goal-by-goal analysis. According to the VNR report, data gaps were identified and include SDGs 2 (Zero hunger), 9 (Industry, innovation and infrastructure), 13 (Climate action) and 15 (Life on land). However, according to a representative of civil society, there are data gaps in all the goals, particularly in SDGs 3 (Good health and well-being), 5 (Gender equality), 7 (Affordable and clean energy), 10 (Reduced inequalities), and 16 (Peace, justice and strong institutions). Furthermore, aspects such as periodicity, disaggregation, standardization, reliability and quality assurance have been identified in the VNR report as issues regarding the available data.

Incorporating the SDGs

In Nepal, the SDGs have been incorporated into national development plans and related policies and frameworks. The VNR report notes that the Nepalese government has formulated national plans and programs that support the commitment towards the SDGs. The National Planning Commission (NPC) released its Fifteenth Plan (2019/20 to 2023/24), that will be important to achieve the SDGs in Nepal. In terms of the 2030 Agenda principles, there is reference to leave no one behind, which counts with a dedicated chapter in the VNR report. On the other hand, the human rights-based approach, universality, planetary boundaries, and inter-generational responsibility are not cited in the VNR report.

Nationalizing the 2030 Agenda

Nepal has established national priorities that relate to the SDGs. According to the VNR report, the country's Fifteenth Plan (2019/20 to 2023/24) established ten national goals that include high and equitable national income, development and full utilization of human capital potentials. However, the information presented in the VNR report does not relate specific SDGs to the outlined priorities. According to the VNR report, country-specific SDG targets and indicators have also been developed and relate to the global indicators.

Civil society validity check

A report produced by civil society refers to the government's claim regarding the integration and alignment of the SDGs in the country's Fifteenth Plan. The report points out that coherence, harmonization and alignment across level-wide ministries still remains a challenge, and that the amount of tangible results regarding the SDGs is insufficient. The civil society report highlights the importance of the local level to the realization of change, and flags that the integration of the SDGs in local government's plans, policies, programs and budgets is sometimes being neglected.

Integration and policy coherence

Expanding on the 2017 VNR report, in 2020 Nepal examined all the 17 SDGs, providing a detailed examination of each goal and mentioning targets and indicators. Moreover, applicable linkages between economic, social and environmental dimensions are referenced in the analysis of specific goals. Policy coherence is mentioned in the VNR report as critical for sustainable development, as well as is the alignment of strategies and plans with the SDGs, and the production of disaggregated data at national and sub-national levels. In terms of international commitments, the VNR report refers to the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. However, it does not mention linkages to the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, Aid Effectiveness and Development Effectiveness Agendas, or COVID-19 commitments.

IMPLEMENTING THE 2030 AGENDA

Leave no one behind

According to the VNR report, the government is preparing a national framework of leaving no one behind (LNOB). It also refers to the existence of more than eighty schemes under the social protection floor in 2019/20. The VNR report identifies elderly, people from remote regions, those with health problems, single women, widows, people with disabilities, children, sexual and gender minorities, Dalits, Madheshi and indigenous peoples as at risk of being left behind. Some results of efforts to LNOB include the increase of the country's Human Development Index (HDI) and Gross National Income (GNI) per capita, and the strong representation of women and marginalized groups in Parliament, national and local governments and legislative bodies.

Civil society validity check

Although the VNR report does not provide specific information on LNOB data, a report prepared by civil society points to insufficient data: "lack of data has made it impossible to track progress, to monitor inclusive growth and improvement and make sure that no one is left behind. Lack of disaggregated data has affected transparency, accountability and just distribution of resources and focus." (*Nepal Civil Society Perspectives on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: CSOs' Voluntary National Review 2020, p. 54*) One recommendation highlighted in the civil society report refers to the country's upcoming census as an opportunity to collect disaggregated data.

Awareness raising and localization

The VNR report makes no reference to government initiatives or awareness-raising campaigns around the SDGs. With regards to localization, the VNR report mentions that implementation of the SDGs is facilitated by provincial-level steering committees. Such committees are composed of government representatives, private sector, cooperatives and civil society organizations (CSOs).

Partnership to realize the SDGs

According to the VNR report, non-state actors are involved in the implementation of the SDGs in Nepal. Parliamentarians advocate for the SDGs and recognize the importance of integrating them in parliamentary discourse and activities. Civil society works on policy advocacy and implementation of targeted programs that include health, education, poverty alleviation, and capacity building. Apart from these examples, the private sector, academia, the National Human Rights Commission, and the Office of the Auditor General of Nepal have also carried out actions towards realizing the SDGs. At the external level, international partnerships and the role of development partners are mentioned in the VNR report.

Means of implementation

The VNR report points to a number of challenges for SDGs implementation, such as natural disasters (Nepal is particularly susceptible to landslides, floods and droughts) and calamities such as the 2015 earthquake and the COVID-19 pandemic. On the other hand, it notes lessons learned that include the acknowledgment that progress is expedited when policy commitment, institutional arrangements, resources and partnerships work in tandem. Elements such as technology, capacity development, and trade are outlined as important to advance the SDGs achievement. In terms of budgeting, the VNR report suggests that public investment has been aligned with the SDG goals. In addition, country level implementation has been costed and Nepal has identified sources of finance, such as domestic resources (both public and private) and grants and loans from development partner countries and institutions.

Measurement and reporting

Nepal's overall percentage of data availability is unclear, but the VNR report provides percentages for Tiers I, II and III and includes a table on SDG indicators by nature of data availability. The VNR report refers to efforts to put monitoring and evaluation into practice. One example regards the organization of Evaluation Networking (EvalNet) meetings, which comprises representatives from various government levels, United Nations agencies, academia, among others. In terms of progress since the previous VNR, the 2020 VNR report describes improvements in a number of indicators. As for COVID-19 reporting, it counts as a standalone chapter in the VNR report.

Civil society validity check

Nepal's country profile has been reviewed by a representative of the National Campaign for Sustainable Development (NACASUD) *Nepal*.

NIGER

In 2020, Niger submitted its second voluntary national review (VNR) report to the United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS

Leadership, governance and institutions

The Prime Minister is responsible for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Niger's National Coordination Committee is complemented by an implementation mechanism and a monitoring and evaluation mechanism. The National Coordination Committee supports the Ministry of Planning in its role as National Orientation Council secretariat. This committee brings together various ministerial departments, technical and financial partners, civil society and the private sector. It ensures synergy between sectoral coordination units and is responsible for ensuring the submission of high-quality information from sectoral units and regional coordination cells. The sectoral coordination units involve non-state actors through consultation frameworks composed of representatives of the State, technical and financial partners, the private sector and civil society. Their role is to ensure the implementation and periodic review of the Economic and Social Development Plan.

Stakeholder engagement

The COVID-19 pandemic complicated the mobilization of actors, consultations and concerted action of the various bodies involved in the implementation and monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly at the regional level. According to the VNR report, efforts were made to conduct the VNR in the most participatory and inclusive way possible, including the organization of national workshops that saw the participation of all stakeholders (women, person with disabilities, civil society, private sector etc.), meetings and exchange sessions with vulnerable groups to leave no one behind (LNOB), but also email exchanges when in person meeting were not possible.

POLICIES

Baseline or gap analysis

According to the VNR report, Niger examined all SDGs except SDG 14, life below water, as Niger is a landlocked country. This process led to the establishment of a reference period at national and regional levels, prioritized indicators and a report on metadata. Among the gaps identified, the VNR report notes low access to energy and no significant change in chronic malnutrition. Per capita income increased by an average of 2.2% over the period 2016-2018, but income inequality has increased. Major challenges remain in terms of decent housing.

Incorporating the SDGs

The SDGs have been incorporated at the national level through the Social and Economic Development Plan 2017-2021 and the Sustainable Development and Inclusive Growth Strategy. The 2030 Agenda has also been incorporated in regional and municipal development plans. The VNR report has a specific focus on the leave no one behind (LNOB) principle with a specific chapter on measures taken by the government to this end.

Nationalizing the 2030 Agenda

Niger contextualised and prioritized 16 SDGs, except for the SDG 14 on life below water. Forty-three targets out of 100 were further prioritized in addition to 57 targets relating to the conditions of implementation and partnership under the Social and Economic Development Plan. For the 137 indicators selected to support national targets, 43% are not available or were not reported during the reference period of 2016.

Integration and policy coherence

Niger has developed technical capacity by training Directors of Studies and Programming across ministries to integrate the SDGs into sectoral policies and strategies. Managers in charge of planning and locally elected officials have also been trained to integrate the SDGs into local development plans. The VNR report refers to overall policy coherence across sectoral and national policies, respecting the indivisible and

interconnected nature of the SDGs. The VNR report addresses all dimensions of sustainable development equally. The Social and Economic Development Plan has made sustainable management of the environment a specific strategic axis. The VNR report identifies acceleration measures for the SDGs on all the three dimensions. While it does not mention major international agreements, the VNR report does indicate measures taken by the government to protect biological diversity and tackle climate change.

IMPLEMENTING THE 2030 AGENDA

Leave no one behind

Data to LNOB is provided, although the VNR report notes the need to address the low level of data disaggregation. The LNOB principle underpins the 3N initiative, le Nigériens Nourrissent les Nigériens. This program is integral part of the Social and Economic Development Plan. It supports social care and empowerment of the most disadvantaged groups through several sub-programmes, including in the areas of health, nutrition, social protection, reproductive health and childbirth, schooling and training for young girls and empowerment of rural women. Since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, new programs have emerged. In May 2017, the Government adopted a program aimed at ensuring availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all. Measures to LNOB also include the continuation of free care for children under five years of age and free cervical and breast cancer treatment for women. The government adopted a law specific to person with disabilities. The VNR report also notes social protection measures undertaken by the government to deal with the negative impacts of COVID-19 on the population.

GOOD PRACTICE SPOTLIGHT

The strategy of "les Nigériens Nourrissent les Nigériens" and the policy of free health care and education up to the age of 16 are good practices to LNOB. Together they support multiple SDGs and have a multiplier effect on achieving a sustainable development that is inclusive.

Awareness raising and localization

For a better implementation and an adequate follow-up of the 2030 Agenda, all actors were sensitized and trained to ensure a wide appropriation of the SDGs. To accelerate this process, the dissemination of information on the SDGs is continuing at both central and local levels. Current efforts to raise awareness are expanded using institutions that have access to communities and local populations throughout the country, including community radio stations. In addition to including the 2030 Agenda in regional and municipal development plans, local government officials have also been trained to support their ownership over the agenda.

Partnership to realize the SDGs

Niger's participatory approach to the implementation of Agenda 2030 has fostered partnerships and collaboration between stakeholders. Partnerships are developed with non state actors such as civil society through the implementation of communication strategies, platforms and frameworks for development consultation. Collaboration with youth has also been strengthened through a civil society sub-platform on youth. The VNR report does not provide information on the role of parliamentarians in supporting 2030 Agenda implementation. A comprehensive response plan for COVID-19 amounting to US$2.6 billion over two years has been adopted and is being implemented with the support of development partners.

Means of implementation

The VNR report outlines a number of priority areas in supporting the means of implementation. These include strengthening the financing architecture for the SDGs, building innovative social infrastructure adapted to environmental and climatic conditions, and leveraging innovative financial solutions for women and youth to strengthen resilience and reduce hunger and poverty. The government plans to explore sources of finance including blended finance and funds from philanthropic foundations. Other means of implementation covered by the VNR report include trade, North-South cooperation and triangular cooperation. Public-Private Partnership remains an important channel for private sector involvement, particularly regarding the structural transformation of the economy. In terms of major challenges, the VNR report mentions the need to have more disaggregated, quality and up-to-date statistical data for the monitoring of policies together with the improvement of development financing.

Measurement and reporting

Niger's monitoring and evaluation system is embedded in the institutional framework of the Social and Economic Development Plan 2017-2021. The production of data and information for reporting purposes is the responsibility of the Ministry of Planning and more particularly of the National Statistical Institute.

This VNR report has some level of data disaggregation but it is recognized that there is a lack of disaggregated data for most of the indicators. However, efforts are being made to further strengthen the capacities of the National Statistical Institute and its partners to provide decision-makers with objective bases for adjusting or strengthening their actions.

NIGERIA

In 2020, Nigeria submitted its second voluntary national review (VNR) report to the United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. The country's first presentation was in 2017.

GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS

Leadership, governance and institutions

As noted in the 2017 VNR report, the President established a special office within the Presidency headed by the Senior Special Assistant to the President on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The 2020 VNR report also refers to the establishment of a Presidential Council on the SDGs, which comprises the Inter-Ministerial Committee presented in 2017, and other committees both within the parliament and across all the states of the federation. Moreover, the 2020 VNR report provides information on non-state actor engagement in governance institutions by referring to advisory groups established in 2017 (the 2017 VNR report mentions the Civil Society Organisations Advisory Group on SDGs) that liaise with the Office of the Senior Special Assistant to the President on the SDGs.

Stakeholder engagement

While the 2017 VNR report noted that non-state actors were engaged in the identification of national priorities, the 2020 VNR report makes no reference of national consultations on priorities. It does, however, note the contributions from a Multi-Stakeholder Core Working Group on VNR and a Consortium of the Centre for Learning on Evaluation and Results in Anglophone Africa (CLEAR-AA), Universalia and GRM International in preparing the VNR. The VNR report notes consultation and validation of the VNR report by non-state actors and highlights the impact of COVID-19 as reducing the number of planned consultations and forcing meetings online. The VNR report does not provide information on broader processes for stakeholder engagement.

POLICIES

Baseline or gap analysis

The Nigerian government carried out an SDGs data mapping and published a baseline report in 2016. The 2017 VNR report noted analysis also of policies but the 2020 version refers only to data. In this regard, the 2020 VNR report mentions challenges related to outdated data, as well as issues related to data consistency, variability, coverage and focus.

Incorporating the SDGs

According to the VNR report, the Medium-Term Plan (2017-2020) is consistent with the aspirations of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It also notes that realignment of the national statistical system to supporting 2030 Agenda monitoring. The VNR report refers to the principles of universality and leave no one behind (LNOB) but does not make reference to others.

Nationalizing the 2030 Agenda

Nigeria's national priorities include restoring growth, investing in people through social inclusion, job creation and improved human capital, building a globally competitive economy through investment infrastructure and improving the business environment, building strong governance institutions and driving performance and results through vigorous delivery unit. The report outlines national SDG targets for 2020 and 2030.

Integration and policy coherence

The VNR report includes a summary examination of a limited set of SDGs with a greater focus on social dimensions of sustainable development: SDG 1 on no poverty, SDG 3 on good health and well-being, SDG 4 on quality education, SDG 5 on gender equality, SDG 8 on decent work and economic growth, SDG 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions, and SDG 17 on partnerships for the goals. The VNR report notes the use of the Nigeria Integrated Sustainable Development Goals (iSDG) Model to ensure policy coherence in relation to planning and budgeting. The VNR report however, does

not refer to relevant international agreements impacting 2030 Agenda implementation.

IMPLEMENTING THE 2030 AGENDA

Leave no one behind
The VNR report does not include a dedicate chapter on LNOB but rather includes efforts under specific SDGs or social inclusion. Efforts appear to be informed by existing data however the VNR report makes very little mention of disaggregated data and gender disaggregated data is rarely presented. LNOB groups include women including pregnant women, girls, unemployed people, older people, people with disabilities, new-borns, work-injury victims and the poor. The VNR report recognizes that the COVID-19 pandemic has had particularly negative effects on women and children. The country's national development plan includes reference to social inclusion and the VNR report presents specialized programs and initiatives for women and children.

Awareness raising and localization
While the 2017 VNR report referred to awareness-raising activities, these were not included in the 2020 presentation. In terms of localization, the VNR report notes the need to strengthen sub-national coordination and that sub-national governments are encouraged to adopt and adapt the national plan. Compares to 2017, information is limited. In 2017, the VNR report noted that organizational structures had been established in all thirty-six state governments to support 2030 Agenda implementation and referred to a grant program to support implementation of select SDGs-related projects.

Partnership to realize the SDGs
The VNR report does not provide significant information on the role of non-state actors. It does recognize, however that civil society and academic institutions have made intellectual contributions and notes that

private sector actors are contributing through Corporate Social Investment Strategies. Nigeria's legislature has two standing committees responsible for appropriating money for the SDGs and oversight of projects in support of SDG implementation.

Means of implementation
Major challenges to 2030 Agenda implementation include: poor governance and weak regulatory structures, generous tax incentives and accessibility of tax havens outside Nigeria and corruption. A number of these challenges were also noted in 2017, particularly in relation to weak public sector institutions. According to the VNR report, modelling shows that Nigeria will require N142 trillion to achieve the SDGs. It notes the need for an effective financing strategy to this end, pointing to domestic resources, South-South cooperation, official development assistance and foreign direct investment. COVID-19 has impacted the government's fiscal situation with resources diverted to addressing the pandemic and its consequences.

Measurement and reporting
According to the VNR report, 30% of SDG indicators are drawn from national surveys. While the government aims to have the remaining 70% from administrative data, capacities are not yet in place to make such data available. The VNR report notes the use of a colour system to show the degree of progress achieved since previous reporting with green meaning a target is on track, yellow that it could be achieved and orange that it is unlikely to be achieved. That said, the coding was not available in the VNR report itself.

In 2017, the VNR report noted that the government was establishing a Presidential Committee on the Assessment and Monitoring of the SDGs to serve as the apex national monitoring, reviews, and performance accountability body for SDGs. The 2020 VNR report makes no mention of such a committee and only notes that the next VNR will occur in 2022/3. There is no mention of national reporting.

NORTH MACEDONIA

In 2020, North Macedonia submitted its first voluntary national review (VNR) report to the United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS

Leadership, governance and institutions

Before the 2030 Agenda adoption, in 2010, the Government of North Macedonia established a National Council for Sustainable Development to guide sustainable development policies. It is chaired by the Deputy President in charge for Economic Affairs. It consists of 12 Ministers, Members of Parliament, representatives from the National Academy of Science and Arts, representatives from the chambers of commerce, and representatives from universities. Technical and expert support is provided by ta Technical Working Group coordinated by the Unit for Sustainable Development in the Cabinet of the Deputy President in charge for economic affairs. Later on, a 'Council for Cooperation with and Development of the Civil Sector' was established to promote cooperation and dialogue with the civil society sector. It includes 31 members, of which 13 ministries, the Secretariat of European Affairs, the Agency for Youth and Sport are appointed by the Government, and CSOs propose 16 members.

Stakeholder engagement

Besides participating in the institutional mechanisms to implement the SDGs nationally, the VNR does not identify either a stakeholder engagement or consultation process. The situation changes when referring to stakeholders' participation in the VNR drafting, while the report informs a considerable involvement of Civil Society Organizations, academia, and youth. Less strong participation of chambers of commerce is also reported. No reference about COVID-19 impact on stakeholder engagement in the VNR building is made.

POLICIES

Baseline or gap analysis

The report informs that North Macedonia conducted a Gap Analysis in 2016 to assess the degree to which

SDGs are incorporated into national planning documents for sustainable development, and a Rapid Integrated Assessment of the alignment of the national policy framework with the SDGs performed in 2019 indicated an 83% level of alignment. However, the report does not reflect the contents or results of the 2016 gap analysis. The mentions gaps in youth and gender employment, gender pay, strategies to face unhealthy foods and diets for children, infrastructural gaps, and data.

Incorporating the SDGs

Besides the above mentioned Rapid Integrated Assessment mapping development policy planning documents and legislation against the SDGs, the 2016-2020 National Strategy for Equality and Non-Discrimination -accompanied with amended legislation on the protection of the LGBT community-, the 2017-2020 National Strategy for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and Illegal Migration, the 2020-2026 National Waste Management Plan, 2017-2027 National Strategy for Nature Protection, and the Climate Action Law and Strategy were aligned with the SDGs.

Nationalizing the 2030 Agenda

The report indicates that North Macedonia prioritized five SDGs (SDG 1. No poverty; 4. Quality Education; 8. Decent Work and Economic Growth; 13. Climate Action; and 16. Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions), based on priority activities and measures defined in the 2017-2020 Government Program and the five pillars of the 2016-2020 UNDAF. A participatory process for determining national indicators is currently underway.

Integration and policy coherence

The report provides a detailed examination of all SDGs, with equal attention to the three dimensions of sustainable development, albeit with limited references to the linkages between them while analyzing each SDG.

Even when the VNR does not provide information on policy coherence for sustainable development or links between the SDGs and the post-pandemic recovery

plans, it includes some reference to 2030 Agenda international-related documents, explicitly mentioning the Paris Agreement, the Convention on Biological Diversity, and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, among other multilateral environmental agreements.

(2030) IMPLEMENTING THE 2030 AGENDA

Leave no one behind

The VNR states that the Government has embraced the 2030 Agenda making 'leave-no-one-behind' a key principle underpinning its activities. It identifies vulnerable groups: youth who are not in education, employment, or training; women and girls, the Roma community, children, people with disabilities, refugees/migrants/asylum seekers/internally displaced persons/stateless persons, LGBTI, people living in rural areas/small farmers, and the elderly. The VNR links LNOB with the COVID-19 impacts, indicating that the disruption of social care services and assistance affects the impoverished households the most, forecasting that the effects will also be different for men and women.

The social protection system focuses on social services, implementing temporary residence services, family care, home care, and personal assistance measures to support the most vulnerable.

Regarding gender equality, a National Action Plan for Gender Equality and a Land Tenure Governance Framework promoting women's access to land were adopted, among other actions and policies. In the same line, steps against domestic inequalities were taken. As a result, the report shows statistical data reflecting that many gaps narrowed.

Awareness raising and localization

The report does not provide information on the government's efforts to raise awareness of the SDGs. The report provides limited information on the role of municipal authorities in implementing and monitoring the goals but mentions Local governments participation in the national SDGs implementation governance, the adoption of a national law on Municipal Cooperation providing a framework for cooperation between municipal Governments, the development of sustainable tourism strategies by 17 municipalities, and the local Governments responsibility for communal waste management.

Partnership to realize the SDGs

According to VNR, local stakeholders are highly engaged in SDGs' national implementation. It provides examples of partnerships, such as establishing mobile teams of social workers, law enforcement officers, and civil society members to reinforce victims of trafficking assistance. Four agreements between CSOs and the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy were signed to financing the delivery of services against domestic violence. The Global Compact National Network awarded companies implementing the 2030 Agenda. Academia has been involved in developing a National Action Plan to Combat Desertification. Y-PEER, a youth network, promoted the 2030 Agenda among young people, and its work is the basis of a report section on youth contribution to the VNR. The country received external partner support to conduct the Voluntary National Review process.

Means of implementation

The VNR refers to all the 2030 means of implementation. It notes that the Government created a Fund for Innovation and Technology as part of the Economic Growth Plan and launched an initiative to strengthen local governments and NGOs' capacities for protected areas management. The COVID-19 pandemic and the refugee crisis are two critical systemic issues highlighted in the report. Regarding international financing, North Macedonia's dual role in international cooperation is underlined. North Macedonia's prominent international donors and primary recipients are mentioned.

The VNR also explains that planning and policymaking are done independently from the budgeting process. Consequently, most strategies and programs do not have a concrete budget allocation. This impedes the alignment of financial support with long-term national goals, including the SDGs.

Measurement and reporting

The status of data for SDG monitoring is unclear from the report, however, it is noted that additional efforts are needed to improve data availability, including disaggregated data. To that end, a new Law on Personal Data has been prepared and is currently under review, and the VNR recognizes the need of establishing a National Information System for Nature. Besides national statistics, the 2020 report includes information provided by the IMF, the World Bank, Eurostat, Transparency International, UNDESA, and the OECD.

PANAMA

In 2020, Panama submitted its second voluntary national review (VNR) report to the United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. The first was introduced in 2017.

GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS

Leadership, governance and institutions

An Inter-institutional and Civil Society Commission for Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) implementation and monitoring exists. Led by a Superior Directorate composed by the Ministry of Social Development, the Executive Secretary of the Secretariat of Presidential Goals, and the President of the National Agreement for Development, the commission was established in 2015. The Commission was introduced in detail in the 2017 VNR report. A National Development Concertation was established in Panama in 2008, bringing together representatives of the private sector, unions, civil society, churches, academic institutions, indigenous peoples, political parties and national government. It participates in the Inter-institutional and Civil Society Commission for SDGs.

Stakeholder engagement

Beyond governing mechanisms, the VNR report does not articulate broader strategies or processes for ongoing stakeholder engagement in 2030 Agenda implementation. However, it notes that non-state actors were involved in the VNR. This included consultations with civil society organizations, private companies, academia and international organizations through virtual surveys organized around the 2030 Agenda's 5 Ps approach. As a result, the government identified sector priorities for each of people, prosperity, planet, peace and partnership. For example, regarding prosperity, all stakeholders prioritized the need for increasing public investment in science and technology to 1% of the national GDP.

POLICIES

Baseline or gap analysis

The 2020 VNR report only makes reference to a baseline exercise in general terms, merely saying that the national actors "considered it appropriate to choose 2015 as the baseline for the SDGs" (p.62). There is not information on actual gaps identification. It is relevant to recall that the 2017 VNR report stated that financial allocations could be a way to identify social policy action gaps. Although many vague references to existing gaps are included while analyzing each SDG, the issue is not taken up in this second report.

Incorporating the SDGs

Panama considers the SDGs as a strategic framework for designing the Government Strategic Plan 2020-2024, which includes actions related to implementing the 17 SDGs. The SDGs have also been integrated into national and sectoral strategic plans. The 2020 VNR report addresses the principle of leave no one behind (LNOB) as a cross-cutting issue and in a short subchapter. It highlights a human rights-based approach, though it does not mention other 2030 Agenda principles.

Nationalizing the 2030 Agenda

The 17 SDGs have been integrated into the Strategic Government Plan through priorities pertaining to 1) good governance, 2) law and order, 3) economic growth for job creation, 4) poverty reduction and addressing inequality and 5) education, science, technology and culture. The VNR report does not explain how the SDGs were incorporated under each of the country's five priorities. It is not clear from the report if the country has also developed national targets or indicators.

Integration and policy coherence

The VNR report examines all 17 SDGs and addresses all three dimensions of sustainable development emphasizing the social. Linkages between the dimensions of sustainable development in the goal-by-goal analysis are weak. Policy coherence for sustainable development is only mentioned under the SDG 17 on partnerships for the goals. The VNR report refers to environmental agreements including the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and the Convention on Biological Diversity. There

are no references to the Addis Ababa Action Agenda nor does the VNR report refer to global commitments related to COVID-19. Nevertheless, the VNR report includes information on the impacts and challenges that result from the COVID-19 pandemic in a stand-alone chapter and throughout the entire text of the report.

(2030) IMPLEMENTING THE 2030 AGENDA

Leave no one behind
LNOB is considered across the report as a cross-cutting issue. Groups at risk of being left behind are identified, including people living in multidimensional poverty, Afro-descendants, LGTBI population, persons with disabilities, migrants, indigenous peoples, girls and boys, women, and people over 60 years old. Universal and new specialized programs are in place to support those groups, such as the Network of Opportunities conditional cash transfers program, supporting households in extreme poverty and the 'Panameño Sano, Panameño Feliz' (Healthy Panamanian, Happy Panamanian) program for primary health care at the local level. The data presented in the report tend to be available by gender and territory; however, it is rarely shown for other groups.

Awareness raising and localization
The Social Cabinet's Technical Secretariat leads the task of promoting all sectors' participation in the 2030 Agenda. It convenes conferences and working meetings to raise stakeholder awareness of the 2030 Agenda and supports local government SDGs ownership and its incorporation into national and sectoral strategic plans, integrating local capacities into the implementation of national public policies, improving the alignment between local government work plans and the SDGs and decentralizing public policy management. Still, the localization of the 2030 Agenda is underlined as a national challenge to the 2030 Agenda implementation.

Partnership to realize the SDGs
Civil society organizations, the private sector, academia, and the parliament participate in SDG implementation activities, individually and in partnerships with governmental authorities. Examples highlighted by the VNR report include the installation of a solid-waste removal system in the Matías Hernández River, carried out by a civil society organization; the Private Sector AliaRSE Social Responsibility program, providing support to initiatives aimed at improving vulnerable sectors

conditions of life; and the creation of a multidisciplinary academic Observatory for Monitoring the SDGs.

Regarding external partners, the VNR report notes the need for technical assistance, mainly through capacity development and exchange of good practices and lessons learned. The VNR report highlights the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs' SDGs Task Force support to Panama in the VNR report building through advice and technical assistance.

Means of implementation
The report refers to technology, capacity development, international public finance, systemic issues, and trade in the discussion on means of implementation. The adoption in 2020 of a Strategic Digital Agenda, the promotion of South-South cooperation as a knowledge transfer mechanism, the constitution of Public-Private Partnerships for infrastructure development and the adoption of laws aimed at facilitating international trade and improving customs administration are examples mentioned in the VNR report. The VNR report also references how the COVID-19 pandemic could affect national capabilities to implement the 2030 Agenda. National public finance has suffered from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, including federal options to fund SDGs oriented actions. This is particularly worrying given that financing of efforts that seek to meet the SDGs targets has been primarily financed with resources from the general state budget to date.

Measurement and reporting
Considering only indicators with an established methodology and for which far-reaching data is available, Panama can report on 30% of the global SDG indicators. In addition, 22 complementary indicators suggested by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean at the regional level are included in national 2030 Agenda monitoring. Considering that data availability must improve, in 2020, the national government created a Technical Bureau of Statistics and Social Indicators and is working to strengthen the National Statistical System.

Panama's second VNR report looked at all SDGs while its first only examined some. The 2020 analysis of the full set of goals results in overlap between both reports. Furthermore, no references were made to the fulfillment of the commitments outlined in the 2017 VNR report. The2020 report does not provide information on a national reporting mechanism.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

In 2020, Papua New Guinea submitted its first voluntary national review (VNR) report to the United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS

Leadership, governance and institutions

Papua New Guinea has established a comprehensive set of governance arrangements for 2030 Agenda implementation. A National Executive Council led by the Prime Minister is informed by an SDG Inter-Ministerial committee and supported by an MTDP-SDGS (Mid-term Development Plan – Sustainable Development Goals) National Steering Committee and a core secretariat. These mechanisms are informed by an SDG Council. Other units exist responsible for coordination and statistics. Technical working groups and sub-national technical working groups are also listed. Representatives of the United Nations, private sector, churches, civil society, research institutions, women and nominated individuals are part of the SDGs council. Non-state actors also participate in technical working groups.

Stakeholder engagement

In terms of processes of stakeholder engagement, the National Executive Council has a Consultative Implementation and Monitoring Council (established 1998) that allows for consultation with civil society and the private sector among other interest groups. According to the VNR report, this council has been "an effective model of partnership in addressing urgent development issues associated with [… the SDGs], including the VNR" (p. 20-1). The VNR report also notes that non-state actors were engaged in the identification of national priorities and the VNR. The VNR included one-on-one consultations, workshops and peer reviews, though the country shut down between March and April 2020, which meant canceling stakeholder meetings and consultations during that time.

POLICIES

Baseline or gap analysis

Over 2016-2018, a review of the relevancy of the SDGs, their 169 targets and 241 indicators was carried out with support from the United Nations. As a result, 46 SDG indicators were embedded in the mid-term development plan. The VNR report also points to gaps under specific SDGs.

Incorporating the SDGs

The SDGs are incorporated in the mid-term development plan. An SDG roadmap was prepared in 2016 to assist in the integration of the SDGs into the mid-term development plan. The roadmap includes provisions related to governance and overall SDG coordination mechanisms, financing, monitoring and reporting. The VNR report includes mention of leaving no one behind and highlights "a moral obligation and responsibility to our current and future generations" (p. 5).

Nationalizing the 2030 Agenda

In addition to the selection of 46 SDG indicators, the VNR report notes national priorities related to the economy, infrastructure, social development, rule of law, justice and national security, improved service delivery, governance, responsible sustainable development, the environment and a sustainable population.

Integration and policy coherence

The VNR report provides a detailed examination of all 17 SDGs with equal attention to all three dimensions of sustainable development. In terms of policy coherence for sustainable development, the VNR report emphasizes the National Planning Monitoring and Responsibility Act 2016 that serves as a legal framework for national planning on the SDGs and includes references to budgeting and monitoring and evaluation. The Act requires the establishment of suitable institutional arrangements. According to the VNR report, these efforts help to improve policy coherence (and effective implementation). The VNR report also refers to the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, aid effectiveness principles and the Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation.

IMPLEMENTING THE 2030 AGENDA

2030

Leave no one behind

Papua New Guinea identifies women (including widows), children (including orphaned, adopted, and fostered children), settlers, landless people, those suffering from acute poverty with no means for self-sustenance, the elderly, persons with disabilities, and survivors of domestic violence as at risk of being left behind. According to the VNR report, the government provides special encouragement to partners engaging in the principle of "leaving no one behind" and providing both social and development services to remote and rural areas, with particular attention to more disadvantaged and vulnerable communities. A national poverty roadmap was established and included in national strategic development plans. The VNR report highlights achievements in nine of the SDGs. Although Papua New Guinea has not been severely hit by the COVID-19 pandemic, the VNR report states that resources were mobilized by the government in order to contain the spread of the virus, giving particular attention to the most vulnerable populations.

Awareness raising and localization

The VNR report points to awareness raising activities such as consultations and workshops. Both activities aimed to, for example, validate the progress of SDG implementation, promote the assessment and review of the country's goals and targets, and engage stakeholders such as the private sector, CSOs and development partners in the VNR process. In terms of localization efforts, the VNR report mentions that the local government is involved in governance mechanisms. It also refers to ongoing processes of decentralization but does not specify actions related to the SDGs. Moreover, according to the VNR report, the tools in place for monitoring and evaluation and to address issues related to tracking performance and reporting are more prominent at the sub-national level.

Partnership to realize the SDGs

The VNR report recognizes the roles of non-state actors in implementing the 2030 Agenda. Civil society, the private sector and academia are included as important partners in terms of, for example, dissemination of information, provision of infrastructure and social services, and capacity development. According to the VNR report, apart from playing a role in producing research, tertiary educational institutions are working to strengthen the capacity of sub-national government with regards to the SDGs. Another example refers to members of Parliament and governors at the provincial level who have been locally engaged with, among others, rural communities on the SDGs.

Means of implementation

According to the VNR report, the country has identified sources of finance to conduct country level implementation of the SDGs. As public revenues are insufficient to fully cover implementation costs, the VNR report mentions the mobilization of resources both internally and externally through the connection with the private sector, development partners and philanthropists, and the promotion of both North-South and South-South cooperation. Moreover, the VNR report states that Development Cooperation Resources and Official Development Assistance (ODA) remain major contributors towards the achievement of the SDGs in Papua New Guinea. Global trade is recognized in the VNR report as a sustainable means of great economic value whose arrangements are both conducive and complementary to the country's development policies. Furthermore, the VNR report mentions capacity as an important factor for effective SDGs implementation. It refers to the strengthening of various capacities in both the national and the local levels, including the intensification of effective collaborations with non-state actors such as the private sector, civil society, and umbrella organizations focusing on usually less engaged stakeholders, such as people with disabilities and persons living in prisons.

Measurement and reporting

The VNR report does not provide details on data availability, including disaggregated data. However, it recognizes that, as next steps, Papua New Guinea should improve data collection, including the analysis and synchronization of disaggregated data so that the impact of the established policies can be seen in a more representative way. Although the government does not seem to be producing sufficient data, the VNR report mentions that other data sources have been used, including reports produced by the private sector, development partners, civil society and academia.

PERU

In 2020, Peru submitted its second voluntary national review (VNR) report to the United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. The first was introduced in 2017.

GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS

Leadership, governance and institutions

The VNR report identifies two primary institutions for 2030 Agenda implementation: the National Agreement Forum and the Roundtable for the Fight against Poverty. The National Agreement Forum is the central multi-stakeholder platform that includes representatives of the federal government, the private sector, unions, civil society, faith-based organizations, local governments, political parties, peasants organizations and professional associations. It is responsible for promoting multi-stakeholder dialogue as part of national strategic planning, including the 2030 Agenda implementation and follow-up policies. The Roundtable for the Fight against Poverty is focused on establishing political consensus between territorial levels and political parties with parliamentary representation. The governance mechanism was discussed in detail in the 2017 VNR report. In the face of COVID-19, the Executive Power created 'Te Cuido Perú' (I look after you, Peru), a multisectoral working group led by the Ministry of Defense, to provide security and assistance to people affected during the lockdown phase. The VNR report does not outline how this body links with implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Stakeholder engagement

The VNR report does not include references to stakeholder engagement in the VNR nor in broader 2030 Agenda implementation efforts beyond governance mechanisms. It appears that stakeholder participation by non-state actors occurs largely through the 2030 Agenda implementation institutions.

POLICIES

Baseline or gap analysis

The 2017 VNR report presented a gap assessment for all SDGs. The 2020 VNR report does not refer to the gap assessment and notes, without providing data, that there are significant gaps in infrastructure, health, education, urban-rural outcomes and housing access. The VNR report highlights that COVID-19 is strongly influencing national development gaps.

Incorporating the SDGs

In early 2020, Peru began designing a National Development Plan that will serve as a tool for implementing the 2030 Agenda, including provincial and departmental development plans. Advancement on this plan was severely affected by COVID-19, and the planned framework will require adjustments given the impact of the pandemic on existing progress. The report does not consider any of the 2030 Agenda principles, including leaving no one behind.

Nationalizing the 2030 Agenda

The VNR report only mentions that the country's development priorities are established in its National Development Plan, but it does not present them. However, it does point to priorities to confront the COVID-19 effects, namely avoiding preventing losses, ensuring the availability of essential basket components, keeping the economic macro balances in order and considering regionally specific situations in the response to pandemic impacts.

Integration and policy coherence

The VNR report does not examine the SDGs but rather synthesizes recent developments to advance emergency plans and the creation of national development plans in severely adverse conditions. The Paris Agreement is the only international agreement mentioned in terms of linkages with the 2030 Agenda, referring to Peruvian efforts to tackle climate change. The VNR report focuses on the COVID-19 pandemic impacts, considered in a stand-alone chapter and as the report's central theme.

IMPLEMENTING THE 2030 AGENDA

Leave no one behind

While the VNR report states that the COVID-19 pandemic has clearly exposed the vulnerable population's reality, the 'leaving no one behind' principle is not articulated. Rather, the VNR report makes a few isolated and general mentions to poor people, women, and indigenous people as vulnerable groups in the pandemic context. A vague allusion to a bonus transfer to the poor, the updating of the National Gender Equality Policy and the adoption of a strategy to guarantee the Amazon indigenous peoples right to life, health and safety in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic are introduced as tools to support those groups.

Awareness raising and localization

The VNR report does not mention 2030 Agenda awareness-raising efforts carried out by the government. Regarding localization, local government engagement primarily occurs at the Roundtable for the Fight against Poverty and through the design of SDGs-aligned territorial development plans. In addition, a National Assembly of Regional Governments, as part of a temporary Multisectoral Working Group established to formulate a strategy for a progressive economic reactivation post-COVID-19, coordinates national reactivation efforts with each regional government.

Partnership to realize the SDGs

Multi-stakeholder work towards SDGs implementation is not integrated in the VNR report. Stakeholders engagement is only considered in relation to its institutional participation in the National Agreement Forum and the Roundtable for the Fight against Poverty.

Means of implementation

The report focuses mainly on information and communication technology access promotion in rural areas as a means of implementation and says little about building human capacities and national financing. Recalling the 2017 VNR report, the 2020 edition states that to improve the Peruvian productive matrix and its ability to attract external funding, the country must reinforce its human resources and science and technology capabilities. The COVID-19 global health impacts are considered a systemic issue that will affect Peru's path to sustainable development, worsening previous trends such as environmental degradation, insufficient multilateralism, and growing world tensions.

Measurement and reporting

The 2020 VNR report makes isolated and general references to the 2017 VNR report, resulting in a weak continuity between the two. Only one commitment established in the first report, related to adopting a "Vision of Peru to 2050," is considered in the second VNR report, informing that it was adopted by the National Agreement in 2019.

The VNR report does not provide information on data availability or disaggregation gaps. It provides no information on efforts to improve data or national statistic system nor strengthening the reporting processes.
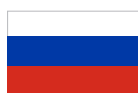
RUSSIAN FEDERATION

In 2020, the Russian Federation submitted its first voluntary national review (VNR) report to the United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS

Leadership, governance and institutions

The Inter-Agency Working Group on Climate Change and Sustainable Development at the Administration of the President was established in 2012 and is responsible for 2030 Agenda implementation. The Working Group aims to ensure efficient interaction and information sharing among federal executive authorities, other public authorities, research and other organizations in the implementation of state policies related to climate change and sustainable development. This includes the Concept for the Transition of the Russian Federation to Sustainable Development (Concept for Transition), approved in 1996. Non-state actors are not included in the Inter-Agency Working Group.

Stakeholder engagement

While the VNR report does not mention a formal process for stakeholder engagement, it notes that 17 thematic working groups, coordinated by the Analytical Center for the Government of the Russian Federation, engaged a range of stakeholders in the VNR preparation process. These included various levels of government, development and research institutions, civil society organizations and business associations. Draft VNR chapters as well as the entire report underwent a series of public consultations. In addition to official state statistics, data from development and research institutions were used in the preparation of the VNR report. Stakeholders were not consulted on the identification of national priorities.

POLICIES

Baseline or gap analysis

The VNR report does not mention the use of a baseline or gap analysis to inform 2030 Agenda implementation.

Incorporating the SDGs

The VNR report notes that most of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and targets had been integrated, to a varying degree, in the basic strategic and policy documents of the Russian Federation "long before the adoption" of the 2030 Agenda. The basic principles of the country's transition to sustainable development are reflected in the Concept for Transition targeted at developing balanced solutions to socioeconomic issues and problems related to environmental preservation for present and future generations. The Russian Federation is implementing twelve National Projects and the Comprehensive Plan for the Modernization and Expansion of Main Infrastructure, which aim to achieve the country's national development goals and strategic objectives up to 2024 as well as the SDGs. While the VNR report does not reference most of the principles of the 2030 Agenda, it highlights the leave no one behind (LNOB) agenda as the underlying principle of Russia's socially oriented policy.

Nationalizing the 2030 Agenda

National goals and objectives, endorsed by the President in 2019, are reflected in twelve National Projects spanning such areas as demography, healthcare, education, housing and urban environment, environment, safe and quality roads, workforce productivity and employment support, science, digital economy, culture, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and support for individual entrepreneurial initiative, and international cooperation and export. The VNR report notes that the National Projects and the Comprehensive Plan for the Modernization and Expansion of Main Infrastructure cover, directly or indirectly, 107 of 169 SDG targets. The report also notes that the Federal Statistics Plan of the Russian Federation includes 90 indicators from the list of global SDG indicators.

Integration and policy coherence

The VNR report examines all 17 SDGs through a

detailed examination of many targets. While the VNR report addresses all the three sustainable development dimensions, there is a greater focus is on the social though the goal-by-goal analysis is limited in referencing linkages between the dimensions. Policy coherence is only mentioned as part of analysis of SDG 17.13 and the VNR report does not present an overarching approach to policy coherence for sustainable development. The VNR report refers to the Paris Agreement on climate change, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction but does not reference the Addis Ababa Action Agenda or the Aid Effectiveness and Development Effectiveness Agendas.

2030 IMPLEMENTING THE 2030 AGENDA

Leave no one behind

The VNR report mentions "considerable achievements" to LNOB. However, it provides little evidence of efforts to LNOB beyond existing programmes targeting specific groups such as World War II veterans, persons with disabilities, low-income families, persons with certain medical conditions and the elderly. The National Action Strategy for Women 2017-2022 aims to narrow the gender wage gap, reduce violence against women and increase the number of women in managerial positions. The VNR report does not discuss how COVID-19 has impacted those left behind.

Awareness raising and localization

The Russian government does not carry out awareness-raising efforts. Instead, it views the VNR report as a vehicle to promote better public awareness of SDG implementation. Some awareness-raising activities are undertaken by youth, civil society and academia. In its analysis of SDG target 10.2, the VNR report mentions programs by Russian cities and regions to assist senior citizens, persons with disabilities and persons experiencing hardship, but does not specify whether these programs explicitly aim to advance the target. Beyond these examples, the VNR report does not address localization efforts.

Partnership to realize the SDGs

The VNR report recognizes the role civil society plays in SDG implementation by carrying out outreach,

educational, research and charity projects targeting specific SDGs. The VNR report provides a list of such organizations, along with multiple examples of projects. It notes that youth have been involved in awareness-raising activities through the following programs: School SDG Leaders, University SDG Leaders, and Children SDGs ambassadors. It also notes that the business community is actively engaged in projects that help achieve specific SDGs relating to all three components of the 2030 Agenda. Examples of projects are provided throughout. A number of major companies in Russia include the SDGs in their strategies and the VNR report highlights sustainable business practices promoted by the Global Compact Network Russia and the Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs. The government also expects increased citizen involvement in SDG implementation. At the international level, the Accounts Chamber of the Russian Federation is the Chair of the International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI) Working Group on SDGs and Key Sustainable Development Indicators.

Means of implementation

The VNR report describes Russia as "an active and responsible member of the international donor community." The report states that between 2014 and 2020, Russia allocated more than USD 5.5 billion in international development assistance. In 2018, federal official development assistance expenditures amounted to about USD 1 billion. Russia also provides technological and capacity-building assistance to other countries, particularly members of the Commonwealth of Independent States. Russia is actively engaged in building regional cooperation in Eastern Europe, South Caucasus, Central Asia, and Asia-Pacific through multilateral arrangements such as the Eurasian Economic Union, BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization among other initiatives. The VNR report highlights Russia's contribution to the development and launch of New BRICS Development Bank and Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. With regard to COVID-19, the VNR report highlights bilateral aid provided by Russia to other countries which comprised personal protective and medical equipment, COVID-19 test kits, as well as assistance rendered by medical personnel. The VNR report does not present information regarding Russia's means of implementation for domestic efforts.

Measurement and reporting

The VNR report is unclear on current data availability in Russia. The Federal State Statistics Service is responsible for SDG monitoring and coordination of preparation and submission of official statistics on SDG indicators to international organizations. In 2017, the Federal Plan of Statistical Works included a subsection on "Sustainable Development Goals Indicators in the Russian Federation" containing 90 indicators from the Global SDG Indicator List. The VNR mentions a 2020 audit conducted by the Accounts Chamber of the Russian Federation to assess, *inter alia*, the readiness of the SDG monitoring system in the executive bodies but provides no information on its findings. The VNR report does not provide information on future national reporting.

SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES

In 2020, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines submitted main messages to the United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development for the first time.

GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS

Leadership, governance and institutions

According to the main messages, government ministries and agencies are responsible for aligning all policies and critical programs with the 2030 Agenda.

Stakeholder engagement

The main messages state that extensive stakeholder consultations and involvement will underpin the advancement of Agenda 2030. A focus has been placed on strengthening mechanisms to enhance the participation of all stakeholders in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

POLICIES

Baseline or gap analysis

A Rapid Integrated Assessment of the country's planning framework highlighted that Saint Vincent and the Grenadines currently has 62 percent of all its planning and policy documents aligned with the SDGs and targets. The main messages document only refers to financing gaps as a challenge to the country's SDGs implementation.

Incorporating the SDGs

The country's vision of "Improving the Quality of Life for All Vincentians" is built on the principle of putting people at the center of its development. According to the main messages, country's National Economic and Social Development Plan (2013-2025) was aligned with the SDGs.

Nationalizing the 2030 Agenda

St. Vincent and the Grenadines focus its development plans on being a diverse, modern, internationally competitive country, committed to the social

development of its people, and environmentally sustainable. The National Economic and Social Development Plan aligns the country's development objectives with related SDGs and targets and elaborates five interrelated development goals. These include 1) ensuring a better quality of life for all through the re-engineering economic growth, 2) enabling increased human and social development, 3) promoting good governance and increasing the effectiveness of public administration, 4) improving physical infrastructure, preserving the environment and building resilience to climate change, and 5) building national pride, identity and culture.

Integration and policy coherence

The main messages do not include an overview of the 17 SDGs.

IMPLEMENTING THE 2030 AGENDA

Leave no one behind

According to the main messages, the concept of leave no one behind is critical to the country's development pathway. For the country, this means reducing inequalities, eliminating all forms of poverty and empowering women and youth.

Awareness raising and localization

There are no references to awareness-raising actions taken by Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. Information on localization refers only to operationalizing the national development plan.

Partnership to realize the SDGs

The main messages recognize the importance for partnerships as part of 2030 Agenda implementation but do not provide information on specific stakeholder groups. Rather, it notes that SDG implementation

requires a holistic approach involving the public and private sector, civil society, the media and youth engagement.

Means of implementation

The VNR building process required innovative solutions as the country battles issues related to mitigating mechanisms resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, heightening the role of technology in accomplishing these goals. At the time of a global pandemic, the preparation of the VNR report highlights how current known and new and emerging vulnerabilities can suddenly affect countries' development trajectory. The main messages note that the challenges and opportunities arising from the fight against COVID-19 must be considered to achieve the 2030 Agenda in the new context.

Measurement and reporting

The Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Statistical Office was tasked with creating mechanisms for data mining of SDG indicators. The monitoring and evaluation framework for SDG implementation should be completed to facilitate better tracking, reporting and progress analysis.

SAMOA

In 2020, Samoa submitted its second voluntary national review (VNR) report to the United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. Its first presentation was in 2016.

GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS

Leadership, governance and institutions

According to the VNR report, Samoa made progresses since its first VNR report by further integrating the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into national processes. The country's leadership on SDGs implementation lies with multiple cabinet ministers, as the Samoa SDGs Taskforce core members include the Ministry of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, the Ministry of Natural Resources, and the Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development Environment. Samoa participates in activities at the regional level, engaging in regional coordination on the SDGs.

GOOD PRACTICE SPOTLIGHT

Samoa participated in a good practice initiative regarding regional coordination. Alongside Papua New Guinea, Australia, and a CSO representative from Fiji, Samoa engaged in the first global review of a VNR process. This initiative, named Pacific Islands Forum Peer Review, focused on Vanuatu's VNR report in 2019. The participation in Vanuatu's review bared lessons that were valuable for Samoa's own VNR process.

Stakeholder engagement

The VNR report mentions a concrete form of stakeholder engagement through a funding mechanism, through which financing and support facilities are dedicated to civil society and private sectors. With regards to the VNR process, data validation consultations were carried out across government, civil society, and private sector stakeholders to, among others, validate and

discuss existing data, and further contextualize goals and targets. The processes of stakeholder engagement were affected by both the measles and the COVID-19 pandemic, as key consultations were either delayed or postponed.

POLICIES

Baseline or gap analysis

The VNR report shows that Samoa has identified and assessed data by using the latest data matrix from the Samoa Bureau of Statistics. Moreover, the SDGs Taskforce Secretariat, with the support of the United Nations system, compiled a matrix with all the relevant data for each global indicator. However, the VNR report does not present numbers on the available data in terms of identified gaps.

Incorporating the SDGs

The VNR report notes that the SDGs have been integrated into the Strategy for the Development of Samoa (SDS), which contextualizes implementation at the country level and includes the SDGs in national processes of planning, budgeting, and accountability. While the VNR report does not make reference to some of the principles of the 2030 Agenda, it mentions the establishment of institutions and mechanisms to enhance a human rights-based approach to development, and includes a dedicated chapter to leave no one behind (LNOB).

Nationalizing the 2030 Agenda

National priorities have been selected through a people-centred approach. According to the VNR report, the main priorities for the country emphasize, among others, social inclusion, economic sustainability, and environmental resilience. The VNR report states that the national targets and indicators are aligned to the global targets and indicators. More specifically, it notes that there are 246 indicators that either align with global SDG indicators and/or have been built to be relevant to Samoa's national context.

Integration and policy coherence

The VNR report examines all 17 SDGs through a detailed examination that mentions targets and indicators. Policy coherence is referred to as an outcome of the country's sector-wide approach, which aims to increase the coherence between sectoral policy, spending and results through the promotion of transparency and dialogue. The VNR report refers to several applicable linkages between the three dimensions of sustainable development (economic, social and environmental) in its analysis of specific goals, targets and indicators.

GOOD PRACTICE SPOTLIGHT

Samoa's second VNR analyzed the country's priority areas established by its development strategy and highlighted that such strategy shares the 2030 Agenda's interlinkages of the three dimensions of sustainable development. In the goal-by-goal analysis of the VNR report, specific sections named "interlinkages" indicate such interrelations for each SDG.

The VNR report refers to the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, and the Aid Effectiveness and Development Effectiveness Agendas.

GOOD PRACTICE SPOTLIGHT

In 2010, Samoa was one of the few Pacific Island Countries (PICs) participating in the global evaluation on the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness implementation. Moreover, Samoa engaged in both global and regional aid and development effectiveness efforts, such as the High-Level Conferences carried out in Accra (2008), Busan (2011), Mexico (2014), Nairobi (2016), and the Pacific Forum Compact between 2010 and 2015.

IMPLEMENTING THE 2030 AGENDA

Leave no one behind

According to the VNR report, Samoa's approach to leave no one behind (LNOB) relates to the reduction of poverty and addressing the needs of those groups considered most vulnerable. With regards to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the VNR report refers to the announcement of a stimulus package, through which the government aimed to target vulnerable groups and provide them with more focused social protection measures. Results of LNOB efforts are mentioned under each one of the groups specified in the VNR report. One of these results refers to the constant improvement of Samoa's Gender Inequality Index.

Awareness raising and localization

The Samoan government carried out awareness-raising campaigns that relate to the SDGs (for example, a campaign on the importance of vaccination directly connects to SDG 3. Good health and well-being), although they are not specific to SDGs-awareness. In terms of localizing the 2030 Agenda, the VNR report mentions that local governance and non-state actors at the villages and communities' level are engaged in, for example, disaster management and response plans, water management, and energy efficiency.

Partnership to realize the SDGs

The VNR report recognizes that non-state actors play a role in SDG implementation. Some examples refer to actions carried out by civil society, the private sector, children and youth, and the Samoa Audit Office. The later conducted a performance audit to assess Samoa's level of preparedness for SDGs implementation, whose findings and recommendations were widely shared and provided input to the SDGs Taskforce. In the context of COVID-19, a Samoan company developed a mobile phone application to connect vendors and buyers and therefore help generate income for vulnerable groups such as rural farmers, fishermen, artisans while still complying with social distancing requirements.

Means of implementation

The VNR report describes some lessons learned in accelerating SDGs implementation. These include the importance of leadership and capacities at the national level, and the importance of all levels-partnerships that

are both respectful and accountable. Both challenges and opportunities regarding implementation are highlighted throughout the goal-by-goal analyses through dedicated sections. Some challenges referred to in the VNR report are limited capacity in data analysis and management, uncoordinated SDGs support efforts, vulnerability to natural disasters and external chocs, and measles and COVID-19 socio-economic impacts. With regards to budgeting and financing the 2030 Agenda, the VNR report mentions that the SDGs have been incorporated into Samoa's development strategy, including in budgeting processes, and mentions domestic financing, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and Official Development Assistance (ODA) as sources of revenue for SDGs implementation.

Measurement and reporting

The VNR report is unclear on current data availability in Samoa, although it suggests that the country has met 23 global indicators of the 246 ones selected to measure Samoa's progress on SDGs implementation. The VNR report recognizes challenges regarding available data, but where no data was available from national reports, different source bases were used, such as datasets on SDGs from the Pacific Sustainable Development Report 2018, the United Nations, the World Bank, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), among others. In terms of the VNR process, the VNR report refers to improvements and achievements since the previous report, but data is not presented with graphic mechanisms (such as a traffic light system, for example) to show progress since the last report.

SEYCHELLES

In 2020, Seychelles submitted its first voluntary national review (VNR) report to the United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS

Leadership, governance and institutions

Created in 2016, the Economic Planning Department was responsible for developing "Vision 2033" and the country's National Development Strategy (2019-2023) to support implementation of the Vision. A National Oversight Strategic Committee for the Implementation of Seychelles' Regional and Global Commitments exists, established in 2017. Chaired by the Minister for Economic Planning and the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs as alternate chair, the Committee includes representation at Principal Secretary and Chief Executive Officer levels of government institutions, civil society, the private sector and the Parliament. United Nations agencies participate as observers with meetings held every two months.

Stakeholder engagement

In terms of nationalizing the 2030 Agenda, the VNR report notes a "bottom-up" approach to developing Vision 2033 informed by widespread consultations, including with vulnerable groups such as persons with disabilities and elderly persons. For the VNR, consultations were held through workshops with diverse groups and an awareness-raising campaign was launched to encourage engagement. The VNR report notes collaboration with non-governmental organizations and the private sector on the VNR process. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, some face-to-face meetings had to be cancelled as well as some planned awareness-raising activities. Moreover, the VNR report mentions a synchronized approach for ongoing stakeholder engagement through consultations. Such consultations strengthen partnerships at the local level and involve stakeholders into, for example, budgeting processes, national plans and country's reforms.

POLICIES

Baseline or gap analysis

According to the VNR report, Seychelles carried out an assessment of data to inform 2030 Agenda implementation. The VNR report includes a statistical annex that provides an overview of available indicators. The country's SDG Baseline Assessment Report of 2019 noted significant gaps in data collection and dissemination.

Incorporating the SDGs

As noted above, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were incorporated into Vision 2033 and the National Development Strategy (2019-2023). In addition, government institutions have adopted the SDGs as part of sectoral mandates and functions. The VNR report includes a dedicated chapter on leaving no one behind and refers to preserving the environment for future generations though not explicitly the term intergenerational responsibility.

Nationalizing the 2030 Agenda

The government's five-year national development strategy has six pillars pertaining to 1) governance, 2) people at the centre of development, 3) social cohesion, 4) innovative economy, 5) economic transformation, and 6) environmental sustainability and resilience. According to the VNR report, Seychelles has identified national targets and indicators that are aligned with the 2030 Agenda.

Integration and policy coherence

The VNR report provides a detailed examination of all 17 SDGs with equal attention to all dimensions of sustainable development. It refers to policy coherence for sustainable development, understood in the context of ensuring policy coherence between national policies, the 2030 Agenda and other major international agreements relevant for 2030 Agenda implementation, notable the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, the SAMOA Pathway and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

IMPLEMENTING THE 2030 AGENDA

2030

Leave no one behind

The country's assessment of available SDG baselines suggests that more data is needed to leave no one behind (LNOB). Groups at risk of being left behind include youth, poor people, women, people with disabilities and elders. In 2017, the government established a Poverty Alleviation Department under the Ministry of Family Affairs to help better target poverty alleviation measures. An Inclusive Education Policy was launched in 2015 followed by a National Gender Policy in 2016. The VNR report includes a number of other existing and new specialized initiatives to help particular LNOB groups.

Awareness raising and localization

The VNR report points to a number of efforts by the government to raise awareness of the 2030 Agenda in relation to specific SDGs. In terms of broader awareness-raising efforts, it points to the VNR process that included media awareness campaigns and the use of social media to raise awareness. For example, several outreach and educational campaigns were carried out by the government and non-state actors alike to raise people's awareness pertaining specific SDGs. The VNR report recognizes the importance of local partnerships and refers to a synchronized approach to collaborate with local stakeholders to move the 2030 Agenda forward. The VNR report also refers to participation by and involvement from local governments, civil society and private sector at the local level in the implementation of specific SDGs.

Partnership to realize the SDGs

The VNR report includes examples of specific efforts by non-state actors and others to implement the SDGs. Parliament is noted to be an advocate of the agenda. Civil society and the private sector are helping to implement specific goals and assisting the government

in addressing the COVID-19 pandemic and its impacts. The VNR report also highlights the role of youth organizations in promoting the SDGs.

Means of implementation

The VNR report notes a key challenge for Seychelles pertaining to its high-income status achieved in 2015. The country is now on "equal footing" with other more developed countries that are better able to manage emerging challenges while still having a small population and limited resources to implement the 2030 Agenda. Moreover, the country faces global systemic issues pertaining to climate change and rising sea levels. In terms of financing for implementation, the VNR report notes that the SDGs are included in the national budget speech and that the budget is explicitly inked to Vision 2033 and hence the SDGs. The country has limited access to concessional finance given its income status and as such, focuses on domestic resource mobilization, public-private partners and innovative finance to implement the 2030 Agenda. While the VNR report notes positive historic trade and foreign aid relationships with Europe, it also emphasizes the country's exposure to Europe in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Contractions in European economies will have a significant effect on the country.

Measurement and reporting

The VNR report does not indicate the total number of indicators for which Seychelles has data to monitor 2030 Agenda implementation though it notes challenges in generating reliable statistics and that the government would appreciate capacity development to better monitor and evaluation its efforts. There is a need for the country to better coordinate data production and make better use of administrative data. The VNR report does not provide information on overall national reporting – timelines, responsibilities or frequency. It does, however, note that parliament held a meeting in 2019 to review progress towards achieving SDG 16, carried out in collaboration with other stakeholders.

SLOVENIA

In 2020, Slovenia submitted its second voluntary national review (VNR) report to the United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. The country's first presentation was in 2017.

GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS

Leadership, governance and institutions
The 2017 VNR report refers to a permanent Inter-ministerial Working Group on Development Planning as a coordination mechanism to promote policy coherence. However, the 2020 VNR report only refers to the Government Office for Development and European Cohesion Policy that coordinates monitoring, awareness raising and information flow between government institutions. As was the case in 2017, the 2020 VNR report does not outline how nonstate actors are engaged in governance or institutional mechanisms related to SDG implementation.

Stakeholder engagement
The 2017 VNR report noted that representatives of different groups were included in the process of drafting the Vision of Slovenia 2050 that informs the national development strategy. The 2020 VNR report refers only to a survey of youth that informed national priorities. According to the VNR report, the VNR was a highly inclusive process involving a diverse range of stakeholders that provided expertise.

POLICIES

Baseline or gap analysis
In its 2017 VNR report, the government reported having carried out a preliminary gap analysis of the government's policies and existing measurements. The 2020 VNR report refers to an assessment of available data and a review of responsibilities for data collection. This process led to the selection of national indicators and clear responsibilities for monitoring.

Incorporating the SDGs
According to the VNR report, Slovenia was one of the first countries to incorporate the 2030 Agenda into its policies, namely through the Slovenian Development Strategy 2030. The VNR report refers to the 2030 Agenda principles of universality, leaving no one behind, and recognizes inter-generational dynamics. While it does not refer to planetary boundaries, the VNR report does refer to the capacities of the planet.

Nationalizing the 2030 Agenda
The 2020 VNR report re-iterates many of the priorities presented in 2017 including the need for balance economic, social and environmental development, highlighting high quality of life for individuals. To this, it adds an emphasis on the low-carbon circular economy and managing demographic change. The VNR report mentions only the establishment of national indicators, pointing to 54 indicators that reflect the country's sustainable development situation.

Integration and policy coherence
Like in 2017, the 2020 VNR report provides a detailed examination of all SDGs, with equal attention to economic, social and environmental dimensions, and refers to applicable linkages between dimensions in analysis of specific goals. Policy coherence for sustainable development is supported by coordinated efforts across ministries and defined contact points for 2030 Agenda implementation. The VNR report refers to environment and climate-related international agreements that support the 2030 Agenda.

IMPLEMENTING THE 2030 AGENDA

Leave no one behind
The VNR report does not specifically identify groups at risk of being left behind, but does not retired women, tenants and the unemployed are at the highest risk of

poverty. In 2017, the VNR report pointed to children and adolescents, the elderly, women who experience domestic violence, people with mental health problems, homeless people, at-risk users of illicit drugs, people with various forms of functional disability, Roma, and immigrants as at risk of being left behind. In comparison to 2017, the 2020 VNR has a more limited presentation of efforts to leave no one behind.

Civil society validity check

The report provided by Slovenian civil society organizations provides a significantly more robust discussion of challenges related to leaving on one behind in comparison to the official VNR report. Notably, the civil society report points to the need for greater efforts by the government to support individuals that identify as part of the LGBTI community.

Awareness raising and localization

As was the case in 2017, the government made use of the VNR in 2020 to further raise awareness of the 2030 Agenda. While the VNR report does not provide a comprehensive overview of the status of localization in the country, it includes examples of local initiatives as part of good practice in the presentation of some SDGs.

Partnership to realize the SDGs

The 2020 VNR report showed improvement over 2017 in terms of providing information on the contributions of most stakeholder groups to the SDGs. However, it does refer to efforts with civil society organizations, noting their work in supporting consultations. The VNR report also recognized that civil society organizations were preparing a parallel report and noted examples of civil society implementation in realizing specific goals.

Specific projects involving the private sector, academia and youth.

Means of implementation

The VNR report highlights examples of good practices and challenges throughout the goal-by-goal analysis but does not provide an overall view of them in the context of implementation more generally. Many aspects of the means of implementation are not included, particularly in relation to capacity development, the impact of systemic issues, budgeting and financing for 2030 Agenda implementation. The VNR report does have a strong focus on Slovenia's provision of international public finance however, noting examples throughout and the country's commitments to official development assistance. The VNR report notes efforts to address the impacts of COVID-19 mainly in the areas of restricting close contact, suspension of air traffic, school closures and freezing the budget to provide additional resources for addressing the pandemic.

Measurement and reporting

In 2017, the government noted it would strive to increase the amount of available data for SDG indicators. The 2020 VNR report however does not provide information on overall data availability, nor efforts to improve data availability. The VNR report notes that challenges exist in terms of ensuring representative statistics for vulnerable groups. In 2017, Slovenia noted the plan to report on the SDGs as a regular part of annual reporting on the implementation of the new national development strategy. This appears to be the case as well in 2020, with the government adding that a website was created that showcases indicators for Slovenia. The Government Office for Development and European Cohesion Policy has overall responsibility for annual reporting working with the national statistical office and government ministries.

SOLOMON ISLANDS

In 2020, Solomon Islands submitted its first voluntary national review (VNR) report to the United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS

Leadership, governance and institutions

The VNR report mentions awareness raising efforts carried out by the government towards parliamentarians, and it also refers to organizational structures to build the VNR report itself, but it does not really inform about governance structures towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). On the other hand, the VNR report outlines the way through which the SDGs have been integrated into Solomon Islands' national development strategy and the involvement of non-state actors in this process. The VNR report mentions that the ownership of the SDGs has been continuously promoted at the national level through the National Development Strategy Implementation Oversight Committee, in which civil society organizations and the private sector participate actively.

Stakeholder engagement

The VNR report notes that representatives of different groups were included in the process of identifying national priorities in the context of the 2016-2035 national development strategy, both through local and national consultation processes and through coordination committees focused on minority groups. According to the VNR report, Solomon Islands' efforts towards a participatory and inclusive process of SDGs implementation was recognized by the country's Office of the Auditor General. The VNR preparation process was also inclusive of non-state actors, as the VNR report states that development partners and civil society organizations were represented in the VNR Coordination Committee, established in 2019.

POLICIES

Incorporating the SDGs

The VNR report indicates the incorporation of the SDGs into the country's national development strategy and

medium-term strategies. However, it does not clearly mention the principles of the 2030 Agenda: apart from leaving no one behind, which counts with a dedicated chapter in the VNR report, there is no explicit reference to the principles of human rights-based approach, universality, or planetary boundaries. On the other hand, the VNR report has a strong human-rights focus and recognizes the importance of protecting the environment for future generations.

Nationalizing the 2030 Agenda

The VNR report mentions the establishment of national priorities that are linked to the SDGs and focus on five objectives: "economic growth, poverty alleviation, quality health and education, environmentally sustainable development and good governance." (p. 21) According to the VNR report, performance targets and indicators have been established, but the availability of data to inform each one of those is unclear.

Integration and policy coherence

Solomon Islands' VNR report provides a detailed examination of all SDGs and refers to applicable linkages between economic, social and environmental dimensions in the analysis of specific goals. Policy coherence for sustainable development is not explicitly mentioned in the VNR report. However, it refers to international agreements that support the 2030 Agenda, including the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

IMPLEMENTING THE 2030 AGENDA

Leave no one behind

The VNR report identifies groups at risk of being left behind, including poor people, children, people with disabilities, women, and ethnic groups. The efforts to leave no one behind are overarching; apart from

universal programmes such as social assistance, the VNR report does not mention more specialized programs focusing on specific groups.

Awareness raising and localization

According to the VNR report, the country was able to mobilize different stakeholders around the SDGs and to enhance public awareness in order to structure responses to achieve the SDGs in a collective way. In terms of localization, the VNR report mentions consultations at a nation-wide level to introduce the SDGs at the provincial level. In addition, it mentions the prioritization of a Pacific-based peacebuilding approach that includes the assessment of local contexts and the development of locally derived indicators that aim to support the achievement of SDG 16 (Peace, justice and strong institutions).

Partnership to realize the SDGs

The 2020 VNR refers to the participation of non-state actors towards the implementation of the SDGs. For example, it mentions the involvement of Members of Parliament in a seminar around the SDGs and risk development, the strengthening of public-private partnerships, and the role of civil society in addressing specific needs of vulnerable groups.

GOOD PRACTICE SPOTLIGHT

Youth had an interesting participation in the implementation of SDG 16 (Peace, justice and strong institutions) by organizing a film festival on the topic of anti-corruption. Through this action, a youth group was able to engage a number of candidates running in their constituency to sign political and integrity commitments.

Means of implementation

The VNR report highlights examples of challenges affecting the SDGs implementation, but recognizes the importance of peer learning and sharing to further develop elements like data collection and capacity. Being a Small Islands Developing State (SIDS), a post-conflict country that still emerges from a period of ethnic tensions, and a country that is highly vulnerable to the negative impacts of climate change and natural disasters, Solomon Islands have these systemic issues to face while implementing the 2030 Agenda. On the other hand, the country is aware of the positive impacts of technology, has linked its national development objectives to the SDGs and the national budget, and has costed country level implementation. Moreover, the VNR report shows that the country has identified sources of finance, which includes partnerships and Official Development Assistance (ODA). The VNR report does not mention how trade and the COVID-19 response affect the means of implementation of the SDGs.

Measurement and reporting

The VNR report acknowledges the need to strengthen data and statistical systems and capacity. While it does not provide significant information on data availability, including disaggregated data, it mentions the use of unofficial documents, such as ones produced by United Nations agencies, the International Institute for Sustainable Development, Yale University and the World Health Organization. The VNR process was recognized by Solomon Islands' Office of the Auditor General as a reporting mechanism. However, the VNR report also mentions the recognition that the processes of monitoring and evaluation must be documented in a comprehensive way, including with disaggregated information, and circulated among all stakeholders.

SYRIA

In 2020, Syria submitted its first voluntary national review (VNR) report to the United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

⚙ GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS

Leadership, governance and institutions

The VNR report refers to Syria's National Committee, whose mission is to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the National Development Program for Post War Syria and the progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The VNR process was carried out in cooperation with the country's Supreme Council for Economic and Social Planning, which is responsible for the planning and monitoring of the SDGs implementation. Such council is chaired by the Prime Minister and includes a number of ministers, representatives from the private sector and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), experts and academics. However, the VNR report is not clear as to how the non-state actors are officially engaged in SDGs implementation governance arrangements.

Stakeholder engagement

The VNR report mentions that Syria has been working on the participation of all stakeholders (e.g. relevant government agencies, NGOs, the parliament, academics, university and school students, civil society, the private sector) towards the achievement of the SDGs. Nevertheless, no further details are provided in regard to an overarching approach to stakeholder engagement, nor more practical or tangible examples are provided. On the other hand, the VNR report refers to efforts towards the strengthening of international cooperation, despite the war conditions, so that Syria can benefit from other countries' expertise in the field of achieving the SDGs. According to the VNR report, the war situation and the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic have precluded the possibility of a full commitment to direct participation of multiple stakeholders, especially in regions most affected by the war. In the context of the VNR process, engagement has been partially compensated for by the use of online platforms, which have been used for

consultations and surveys whose inputs informed the VNR report.

🗋 POLICIES

Incorporating the SDGs

The VNR report mentions briefly the existence of a technical task team responsible for the preparation of a statistical report about the progress on the SDGs (indicators and targets) between 2015 and 2019. However, no additional details are provided.

Nationalizing the 2030 Agenda

The VNR report establishes a comparison between the 2030 Agenda and the National Program for Syria. The comparison is done through the 5 Ps (People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace, and Partnerships) and shows, under each P, elements from both the Agenda and the national plan in order to show the consistency between the two frameworks.

Integration and policy coherence

The VNR report assesses the progress on all 17 SDGs via a 5Ps (People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace, and Partnerships) analysis. It includes a detailed examination of all the goals, mentions targets and indicators, and adapts a balanced multi-sectoral approach that takes social, economic and environmental dimensions into account, with an emphasis on social elements. On the other hand, linkages between the three dimensions in the analysis of each goal are weak, and there is no reference to policy coherence. The VNR report does not mention engagement with international agreements on sustainable development, such as the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Convention on Biological Diversity, and Aid and Development Effectiveness Agendas. With regards to COVID-19, even when the VNR report contains information on the government's actions to face the pandemic, these are not linked with the 2030 Agenda achievement.

2030 IMPLEMENTING THE 2030 AGENDA

Leave no one behind

The VNR report considers "Leave No One Behind" (LNOB) as the overall slogan of the national report. It stresses the importance of adhering to this principle in national policies, as well as of achieving an inclusive kind of development that spreads all its results in a context of social justice, rejecting discrimination and ensuring that those in the poorest and most marginalized areas have their rights secured. The VNR report mentions that the targets of LNOB efforts are women and girls, displaced persons and refugees, and the Golan population. However, the VNR report rarely includes gender disaggregated data and considers that additional data is required to LNOB. The efforts towards LNOB are majorly overarching (e.g. social protection system), and the VNR report does not outline specialized programs for specific groups. There is no information on specific efforts to address the impacts of COVID-19 in the most vulnerable populations.

Awareness raising and localization

According to the VNR report, there are awareness raising efforts being carried out towards the SDGs. Some of the most prominent initiatives include the Syrian Youth platform to advocate for the SDGs, "training of trainers" workshops, and a program to support and train young leaderships on the SDGs in cooperation with the United Nations Development Program. In terms of localization, the VNR report mentions workshops aimed at providing a participatory space for stakeholders at the local levels in several governorates at the local level, and states that the 2030 Agenda has been localized in the national development program for Post War Syria. Moreover, the VNR report mentions the existence of programs at the local level, such as the Provincial Disaster Management Development Program, the National Framework for Regional Planning Program, and the Regional Development Plans Program, but does not clarify the role of local governments.

Partnership to realize the SDGs

The VNR report mentions that global partnerships are essential to successfully implement the SDGs. However, it does not specify actions regarding multi-stakeholder implementation efforts. The VNR report considers that a main obstacle is the economic and development blockade that Syria is exposed to at different levels. Measures taken by some countries and organizations impose severe restrictions on sensitive and essential sectors in the fulfillment of the livelihood requirements of the Syrian citizens, and on the process of reconstruction and future development. According to the VNR report, the most important restrictions currently in place include remittances, bank blockades, and restrictions on investment sectors such as oil, technology, travel and aviation. The VNR report suggests that the current situation hinders Syria's development and actions towards the SDGs and highlights the importance of international partnerships and cooperation.

Means of implementation

The VNR report estimates Syria's financing needs until the year 2030 at about 86 trillion Syrian pounds, which include both relief work and physical reconstruction of infrastructures, according to planned priorities. About 32% of Syria's financing needs could be covered by local sources, which suggests that the gap amount of about 58 trillion Syrian pounds should be covered by the international community. The VNR report describes programs and initiatives to realize the SDGs, including the national development program. However, attempts to address structural challenges remain limited, and with the continuation of war and conflicts, the work on development is less likely to produce results. The VNR report considers the war on Syria as an external issue that is hampering the development process of the country.

Measurement and reporting

The VNR report mentions that insufficient statistical data and limited efficiency of the monitoring and evaluation system are main challenges faced by the country with regards to the SDGs. The VNR report outlines objective impediments (e.g. geographical divide, insecurity in some areas, large population mobility, instability in foreign prices) that make the traditional methods of monitoring, evaluation and statistics ineffective. On the other hand, the VNR report alludes to the necessity of a smart use of technology and the need for future efforts on a national monitoring and evaluation system. Such system should be incorporated in a national plan and should include indicators to monitor the country's progress in achieving the SDGs, therefore setting up an implementable statistical mission before national stakeholders, according to the VNR report. In the context of the VNR process, a technical working group was tasked with putting in place an interactive electronic platform that includes an updated database to monitor the progress in achieving the SDGs in cooperation with the Arab Portal for Sustainable Development.

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

In 2020, Trinidad and Tobago submitted voluntary national review report (VNR) to the United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF).

GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS

Leadership, governance and institutions

According to the VNR report, there is no lead institution for implementation and follow-up on the 2030 Agenda. Instead, all ministries should incorporate the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into public policies and plans, through close collaboration between all relevant stakeholders. Efforts are underway to strengthen the institutional framework underpinning the SDGs and enhance cooperation between governmental and non-governmental actors. The main messages do not set out information regarding if and how non-state actors are formally engaged.

Stakeholder engagement

The VNR report notes a high level of stakeholder participation in 2030 Agenda implementation, including in defining national priorities through a government-designed survey to citizens and representatives from the private and civil society. Civil society organizations, the private sector, women, youth, academia, experts and the general public participated in the VNR though consultations and providing information on their efforts to implement the SDGs. Some of this information was included as boxes in the VNR report, mentioning stakeholders as sources of information. Nevertheless, the country still lacks formal mechanisms to engage stakeholders in the SDG implementation process more broadly.

POLICIES

Baseline or gap analysis

The VNR report does not include information on gap analysis or baseline studies, though it does not important gaps in terms of gender equality, reduction of inequality, partnerships and statistical capacities and skills gaps. The VNR report states that the COVID-19 pandemic presented an opportunity to further assess the gaps in social and economic initiatives, which would allow for the implementation of changes and the development of strategies to overcome them.

Incorporating the SDGs

Vision 2030 is the Trinidad and Tobago National Development Plan. The 17 SDGs were integrated across its national goals and thematic areas to implement the 2030 Agenda while remaining focused on local development needs. Vision 2030 has shaped the national commitment to ensure that no one is left behind, a principle that became critical in the country's action to face the COVID-19 pandemic. The VNR report does not mention other principles of 2030 Agenda implementation.

Nationalizing the 2030 Agenda

Vision 2030 integrates and prioritizes all 17 SDGs across five thematic areas into a three to five-year plan. The thematic areas include: 1) Putting People First, 2) Delivering Good Governance and Service Excellence, 3) Improving Productivity through Quality Infrastructure and Transportation, 4) Building Globally Competitive Businesses, and 5) Placing the Environment at the Centre of Social and Economic Development. The VNR report does not make references to specific national targets or indicators.

Integration and policy coherence

Trinidad and Tobago's VNR report focuses on eight SDGs including SDGs 3. Good health and well-being; 4. Quality education; 5. Gender equality; 8. Decent work and economic growth; 10. Reduced inequalities; 13. Climate action; 16. Peace, justice, and strong institutions; and 17. Partnerships for the goals. Goals covered by the VNR report are examined in detail though with limited reference to linkages between dimensions of sustainable development. Overall, the VNR report tends to focus on social aspects over economic and environmental ones. Policy coherence and effectiveness are considered

critical to implementing plans for national development. The Paris Agreement, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda are explicitly linked to SDG implementation. The VNR report includes a chapter addressing the COVID-19 pandemic, which is also considered across the report in a cross-cutting manner.

IMPLEMENTING THE 2030 AGENDA

Leave no one behind

Women, children, persons with disabilities, the elderly, persons living with HIV/AIDS, ex-prisoners, deportees, and the socially displaced are considered at risk of being left behind. Street dwellers and domestic violence survivors are also mentioned as vulnerable groups. The VNR report recognizes that COVID-19 will negatively impact the living conditions of poor and vulnerable persons. Trinidad and Tobago's social protection system supports them mainly through a new set of focused policies. In 2019, the Cabinet of Trinidad and Tobago adopted a national policy for persons with disabilities white paper. Gender focal points have been established across all government institutions and the government distributed food cards to individuals and households living in poverty. The lack of sufficient and disaggregated data is underlined as a challenge to identify and support those at risk of being left behind.

Awareness raising and localization

Building greater awareness of the SDGs was a central pillar of the communication strategy adopted for the VNR process. Several mediums, including electronic and print, were used to create and disseminate information on the SDGs. Topical articles on Vision 2030 and the SDGs were featured in major newspapers between December 2019 and January 2020. The Ministry of Communication's news website highlighted Trinidad and Tobago participation in the 2020 HLPF and social media platforms were used to spread relevant information. The main tools used to engage stakeholders include print and social media campaigns, interviews, works with focus groups and on-line SDGs surveys.

Localization of the SDGs is not addressed in the report.

Partnership to realize the SDGs

The VNR report reflects broad stakeholders' engagement in implementing the SDGs. Activities carried out by the parliament, civil society, the private sector, and academia are mentioned. Some examples include a European Union-funded project to empower the civil society, government and local-communities partnerships to implement coastal tree-planting projects and collaboration with the private sector to implement a ban on the sale of sugary drinks in public schools to combat child obesity. The report identifies trade and green energy as the two primary areas in which external partner technical and tailored financial support is needed. The VNR benefited from support by three external consultants recruited with help from the United Nations Country Team.

Means of implementation

Technology, capacity development, trade, international and national public finance, and systemic issues are addressed as means of implementation. The adoption of laws is the primary tool used by the country to promote them. Thus, in 2018 the government integrated the Vision 2030 development plan into the public sector's annual budgetary process and adopted a National Environmental Policy that promotes environmental capacities building. The government has led strategic trade missions, identifying countries for new trade agreements. Global systemic issues referenced are mainly linked to COVID-19 impacts. Specific actions to confront the pandemic are informed, such as providing rental assistance to families whose income was negatively impacted. However, those actions are not linked with SDG implementation efforts.

Measurement and reporting

The level of national data availability is not clear from the VNR report though data availability and national capacity to collect and disseminate disaggregated data are considered major country challenges. However, no efforts to improve data availability are reported, and the VNR report does not outline national reporting on the SDGs.

UGANDA

In 2020, Uganda submitted its second voluntary national review (VNR) report to the United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. Its first presentation was in 2016.

GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS

Leadership, governance and institutions

A multi-stakeholder National SDG Coordination Framework, established in 2016, guides 2030 Agenda implementation under the leadership of the Office of the Prime Minister. At the parliamentary level, an SDG (Sustainable Development Goal) Policy Coordination Committee also exists. Moreover, there is a National SDG Taskforce that receives input from five task working groups. These are chaired by government organizations and count with civil society, private sector, academia and development partners as official members.

Stakeholder engagement

A National SDG Taskforce was established in 2019 to provide advice on the processes leading up to the VNR. Headed by the Permanent Secretary of the Office of the Prime Minister, the Task Force includes government institutions, parliament, United Nations bodies, civil society and the private sector. Non-state actors were also included in VNR technical working groups. Beyond these institutional structures, the VNR also included broader consultations with citizens and organized groups. The VNR report highlights a number of lessons learned from carrying out the VNR consultations during the pandemic, namely the ability to attract more participants and more diverse participants (including those at risk of being left behind) and cost savings. The government plans to build on this experience to inform future consultations. In terms of consultations on national priorities, while the report does not refer to national priorities specifically, it does note widespread consultation to develop a costed national roadmap for 2030 Agenda implementation.

POLICIES

Baseline or gap analysis

According to the VNR report, the government examined the alignment of its second national development plan with the SDGs, noting 70% alignment. The VNR report also notes plans to review monitoring and reporting systems going forward.

Incorporating the SDGs

Uganda's second National Development Plan affirmed the importance of the 2030 Agenda for realizing Uganda's Vision 2040 and was 70% aligned to the SDGs. According to the VNR report, the third National Development Plan (2020/21-2024/25) provided an opportunity to further incorporate the SDGs. The VNR report refers to the human rights-based nature of the 2030 Agenda and examines efforts to leave no one behind (LNOB) through a dedicated chapter and in a cross-cutting approach. While it does not refer to intergenerational responsibility as an overarching principle of the 2030 Agenda, it does refer to conservation tourism for future generations.

Nationalizing the 2030 Agenda

The VNR report notes that the overall goal of the third National Development Plan is to increase household incomes and improve quality of life. It also lays out specific national priorities, mentioning that industry, governance and environment are priority investment areas for the country to accelerate the SDGs. Moreover, the VNR report notes that SDG targets and indicators have been integrated into the plan.

Integration and policy coherence

The VNR report includes a detailed examination of all 17 SDGs with a greater emphasis on social dimension of sustainable development over others. The government notes that it is improving policy coherence for sustainable development by: 1) developing partnership policies and frameworks to improve the relationship between government and donors, 2) better differentiating between financers, and 3) improving coordination with different non-state actors.

The VNR report refers to a range of international agreements related to climate change though not the Paris Agreement specifically. It does not refer to other relevant agreements pertaining to financing for development or aid and development effectiveness.

⟨2030⟩ IMPLEMENTING THE 2030 AGENDA

Leave no one behind

Women, youth, children, girls, adolescent girls, people with disabilities, children with disabilities, and refugees are noted as groups at risk of being left behind in the VNR report. It appears that efforts to LNOB are guided by existing data. The VNR report notes efforts in relation to the national development plan, as well as a range of existing and new programs directed at supporting specific groups through legal instruments, policies and institutional mechanisms.

Awareness raising and localization

The government supported an SDG Awareness Month in October 2019 with a focus on youth engagement. Activities included an SDG marathon, regional concerts, a high-level panel discussion and media campaigns. In terms of localization, the VNR report notes challenges for local governments in terms of integrating the 2030 Agenda into their day-to-day work and securing local leadership. Local government level associations have been working with civil society however to promote participation by local governments. Local governments have identified SDG focal points to liaise with the SDG secretariat and SDG technical working groups. The VNR report also notes a Local Voluntary Review Report was prepared for Ngora District.

Partnership to realize the SDGs

The VNR report suggest broad engagement by non-state actors, including examples of their activities under specific SDGs. Parliament has been engaged through formal committees and established a Parliamentary Forum on the SDGs. Civil society coordinates through a CSO SDG Core Reference Group and also launched the Tondeka Mabega (Leave No One Behind) initiative to localize the SDGs and amplify the voices of marginalized groups. The private sector has a specific coordination platform and has been engaged in policy making and overall government level coordination. The VNR report also highlights efforts by youth, such those carried out by Open Space and Youth SDG Ambassadors. One Million Youth One Million Solutions was also launched to identify young and talented innovators for continuous mentorship to scale up their ideas.

Means of implementation

The VNR report recognizes the twin global health and economic crises as impacting Uganda's ability to implement the 2030 Agenda. The country notes a variety of different sources of financing including official development assistance, domestic revenue and private finance. According to the VNR report, the government ensures alignment between national budgets and the SDGs through an assessment process for sector budgets. While the VNR report recognizes the impact of COVID-19, it does not lay out the government's specific response and adaptation to the crisis.

Measurement and reporting

According to the VNR report, Uganda has invested in data generation for nationwide coverage with disaggregated data according to gender, age and disability status, among other relevant forms of disaggregation. Efforts are underway to improve 2030 Agenda monitoring and evaluation, including revitalization of the SDG monitoring and reporting platform. While the VNR report refers to parliamentary review of the 2018 Auditor General's Report on progress on implementation of the SDGs, it does not provide information regarding the regularity of national level reporting and the specific provision in place. In terms of reporting in 2020 over what was presented in 2016, the VNR report included a narrative regarding progress made on implementation overall, including information on specific SDGs in which progress was more evident and providing data on progress against specific indicators to compare what was reported in 2016 with progress since.

UKRAINE

In 2020, Ukraine submitted its first voluntary national review (VNR) report to the United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS

Leadership, governance and institutions

The VNR only mentions that Ukraine's government created an Inter-Agency Working Group on SDGs. However, it explains neither its structure nor its memberships, limiting to inform that such Inter-Agency Working Group should coordinate the SDGs achievement efforts.

Stakeholder engagement

The report does not articulate any process for stakeholder engagement. The only information available is that the Ministry for Development of Economy, Trade, and Agriculture of Ukraine established four thematic expert groups on economy, environment, social, and institutions as part of the VNR preparation. The groups included leading experts from line ministries and representatives from executive authorities, Academia, the UN Resident Coordinator's Office, the UN system, the UN Global Compact Network in Ukraine, NGOs, and specialists from analytical centers. It also states that they have made efforts to involve young people's innovative and creative VNR preparation potential. As a result, the only reference of COVID-19 impact on stakeholder engagement is related to its participation in the VNR building process, stating that amidst the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak, the public meeting programmed series schedule was revised, and virtual discussions were held in May. The draft VNR report was placed on the Ministry website for interactive online debate and comments. No information on that consultation results is given.

POLICIES

Baseline or gap analysis

The government assessed all SDGs. Presented as a 2017 National Baseline Report 'Sustainable Development Goals: Ukraine', it established benchmark lines to 2020 for each national indicator. When analyzing each goal, the report compared those baselines with the 2020 real situation to see if they were reached.

Incorporating the SDGs

Ukraine has incorporated the SDGs into its national development plans and related policies. The first step was to incorporate de the SDGs in the country development planning documents. To that end, am SDGs national adaptation process began in 2015. Four years later, an analysis found that the 17 goals and 86 national targets have been incorporated in 162 regulatory legal acts of the Government; 1,394 targets, and 4,296 actions enshrined in those acts are intended to achieve the national adapted goals. However, the report affirms that not all the targets of 17 goals have been taken into consideration, without providing more specific information. Leave no one behind is the only 2030 Agenda principle considered in the VNR.

Nationalizing the 2030 Agenda

The report informs that the government set national priorities. Nevertheless, it shows internal contradictions. On the one hand, the VNR states that all the 17 goals are equally valuable and essential, but some are viewed as transformation accelerators, namely 3. Good health and well-being; 4. Quality education; 8. Decent work and economic growth; 9. Industry, innovation, and infrastructure; 12. Responsible consumption and production; and 16. Peace, justice, and strong institutions. On the other hand, the report affirms that 'Major importance in Ukraine is attached to SDG 8, decent work and economic growth, that should become an accelerator of transformations. It's the only goal closely inter-related with all other goals' (p.10).

Besides, the *2017 National Baseline Report' Sustainable Development Goals: Ukraine'* selected 86 SDGs' national targets and 172 indicators. Later on, the number of indicators was increased to 183. Target values were set for a 2030 horizon, with intermediate values for 2020 and 2025.

Integration and policy coherence

The report covers the 17 SDGs, providing detailed information on most of them. The three dimensions of Sustainable Development are considered, but environmental issues receive less attention. Ukraine added 'effective management' as a national fourth national development dimension, including creating a transparent and fair system of social lifts, improving the efficiency of public authorities and local governments while respecting human rights, ensuring gender equality, and achieving societal intolerance to corruption.

Regarding coherence, a national analysis has revealed shortcomings in the Ukrainian system of state strategic planning and budgeting, resulting in unclear coordination of efforts on the achievement of goals and targets still to be solved. International documents related to the 2030 Agenda are only taken into account by the VR when it focuses on climate change, mentioning the country's ratification of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Kyoto Protocol, and the Paris Agreement.

2030 IMPLEMENTING THE 2030 AGENDA

Leave no one behind

The report states that Ukraine is committed to achieving the SDGs by 2030 according to the 'leave no one behind' principle. However, vulnerable national groups are not identified, and only gender-disaggregated data is available most of the time. Even though, mentions to women and children shows that they are considered as vulnerable groups. The VNR also identifies state social support -without details- to fight against poverty.

The gender component has been integrated into national strategies and sectoral regulatory documents, and a national mechanism for ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women and men has been strengthened. Regarding children, Ukraine presented its *National Thematic Report 'Sustainable Development Goals for Children of Ukraine'* in the framework of the 2019 High-Level Political Forum. Many results of efforts to leave no women behind are reported in the SDG analytical chapter.

The VNR states that 'Of all eight indicators measuring progress in the achievement of the national ambitious Goal 10, it is currently impossible to monitor progress in one of them because of the absence of data. Only two of 7 indicators show positive dynamics; for one of them, it is weak and not sufficient to achieve the 2020 target value' (p.71). Nevertheless, no measure of reducing domestic inequalities is identified.

Awareness raising and localization

No awareness raising actions are reported by Ukraine, and not localisation of the 2030 agenda at country level is reported, out of a few mentions to activities funded by local budgets.

Partnership to realize the SDGs

The VNR reports Civil Society activities to implement the SDGs. Still, it is impossible to know how deep the non-state actors' engagement is because of the lack of concrete information regarding implementing the 2030 Agenda. The private sector increasingly engages in public-private partnerships, but there are no direct links in the report between PPP and SDGs implementation. Ukraine's leading universities and the Ministry for Development of Economy, Trade, and Agriculture signed a memorandum of cooperation to assess the SDGs' achievement progress and forecast development tendencies for the next decade. Youth participation is informed only regarding the VNR building process. The report also includes general references to local non-state actors participating in implementing the SDGs. Parliamentary activities are underlined, but there are 'business as usual,' mainly adopting laws that reinforce gender equality.

Means of implementation

Even if the VNR does not identify any good practice, it is possible to highlight youth participation in the report preparation process. Among the lessons learned in accelerating SDGs' implementation, the report mentions that systemic changes are necessary to formulate a national development long-term strategy involving civil society. The VNR also includes lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic, such as the need of a health care reform, resuming a full production cycle of some chemical and pharmaceutical industries goods, and updating national distance learning approaches. The occupation of Crimea, Sevastopol city, and some others part of the national territory oblast by the Russian

Federation, obsolete infrastructure, inefficient public administration, insufficient resource support, and limited financing are the main challenged to be faced in the SDGs implementation.

Budgeting for the SDGs is not considered. There are always broad references to technology, capacity building, trade, and systemic issues as means of implementation, but neither international nor national public financing is analyzed. In no case, a link between means of implementation and the COVID-19 response is established by the report.

Measurement and reporting

The data availability and its disaggregation levels are unclear from the report. Data gaps are easy to identify in the VNR. Nevertheless, two actions towards improving Ukraine's data availability are presented: The State Statistics Service of Ukraine has established a special

unit within its structure to provide information support for SDGs monitoring, and planning and coordinating information between official data suppliers was institutionalized in 2019. The report also states that the analysis and comparison of the SDGs indicators achievement used data from the UN Sustainable Development Report 2017-2019 and statistical offices of third countries. However, when we look at the reported data sources, we find the Federation of Organic Movement of Ukraine, the USAID New Justice program, the Centre for Sustainable Peace and Democratic Development, and the UNDP as data providers. As national reporting efforts, the report mentions the creation of a special section on the SDGs at the State Statistics Service of Ukraine official website, showing information about official national and international documents on the SDGs, data, and metadata on the SDG indicators, and relevant publications. The SDGs' indicators are monitored on an annual basis.

UZBEKISTAN

In 2020, Uzbekistan submitted its first voluntary national review (VNR) report to the United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS

Leadership, governance and institutions

Implementation of national SDGs is overseen by an interagency Coordination Council, headed by the Deputy Prime Minister, at the new Ministry of Economic Development and Poverty Reduction. A Parliamentary Commission to monitor and facilitate the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Uzbekistan was established in February 2020. Non-state actors are not included in SDG governance structures.

Stakeholder engagement

No formal process for stakeholder engagement is articulated in the report. While non-state actors were not engaged in the identification of national priorities, the United Nations Office in Uzbekistan, in partnership with the Legislative Chamber of Parliament and the national movement 'Yuksalish,' conducted consultations with civil society on the first draft of the VNR report. In the context of VNR preparations, online consultations were also held on human rights and good governance, environment and climate change, and livelihoods and social protection. A series of seminars and roundtables were organized.

POLICIES

Baseline or gap analysis

The VNR does not indicate whether a baseline study or gap analysis was carried out to inform 2030 Agenda implementation. Nevertheless, information presented in the VNR report on nationalization suggests that national targets and indicators were selected based on a review of global indicators against national priorities and policies.

Incorporating the SDGs

The SDGs are incorporated into national development plans and related policies and frameworks and through the use of a national SDG implementation strategy. A Roadmap for National SDG Implementation was adopted in 2018. The report notes that the SDGs broadly align with the National Action Strategy 2017-2021 – a framework for carrying out large-scale reforms in the country. The government is also working on integrating the SDGs into national, sectoral and regional development strategies and program, including the Concept of Comprehensive Socioeconomic Development of the Republic of Uzbekistan until 2030. The VNR report does not explicitly reference the principles of the 2030 Agenda beyond leaving no one behind.

Nationalizing the 2030 Agenda

The VNR report lists poverty eradication as Uzbekistan's top priority. Other national priorities include women's rights, sustainable employment and climate change mitigation and adaptation. The government prepared a list of "some 200 priority indicators" selected from the global SDG indicators deemed relevant to Uzbekistan. Today, of 125 national SDG indicators, 105 (84%) are covered in more than 190 normative, programmatic and strategic government documents. More specifically, 100% of national targets under SDGs 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 10 and 11 is covered in the government's programmatic documents. National targets under SDGs 13 and 17 are covered to a lesser degree, at 50% and 40%, respectively.

Integration and policy coherence

The VNR report examines all SDGs, except SDG 14 (life below water) because the country is landlocked. It provides a summary examination of goals, targets and indicators with limited detail (much of the information presented in the report is not integrated into target- or indicator-based analysis). The report addresses all three dimensions of sustainable development, with limited focus on environmental, and contains limited reference to linkages between the economic, social and environmental dimensions in the goal-by-goal analysis. The VNR report indicates that efforts are underway to establish and evaluate policy coherence mechanisms. The VNR report makes limited reference to other relevant international frameworks and agreements, referring only to the Paris Agreement on climate change and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

IMPLEMENTING THE 2030 AGENDA

(2030)

Leave no one behind

The VNR report argues that the principle of "human interests are above all," which informs the reforms in Uzbekistan, aligns with efforts to leave no one behind (LNOB). Efforts to advance specific SDGs target the elderly, persons with disabilities, people in closed institutions, families that have lost their main income earner, low-income families with young children and single mothers through existing specialized programmes. Such efforts are also directed at reducing the impacts of COVID-19 on vulnerable groups. The report refers to new initiatives to LNOB in light of COVID-19. These include: expansion of social assistance benefits and coverage for low-income individuals, persons with disabilities and members of vulnerable groups that are quarantined or infected; extension of unemployment insurance payments; and measures to simplify application and eligibility assessment procedures.

Awareness raising and localization

The VNR report states that the government used printed and electronic media to raise awareness and inform the public about national SDGs implementation. Twenty-eight SDG consultations in five regions were conducted, reaching 1,348 representatives from non-governmental organizations, youth, persons with disabilities, the media and bloggers. The VNR report does not articulate SDG localization efforts.

Partnership to realize the SDGs

A Parliamentary Commission to monitor and facilitate the implementation of the SDGs in Uzbekistan was established in February 2020. The VNR report notes that civil society, youth and leading non-governmental organizations are "actively involved" in SDG implementation but does not explain how. The report notes that the government is reassigning some of the functions traditionally performed by the government to specific civil society institutions while retaining its leadership functions. The VNR report references legislation aimed at enhancing effective partnerships between the government, the private sector and civil society to implement socioeconomic development programs.

Means of implementation

The VNR report mentions challenges to the implementation of specific SDGs, e.g. reducing domestic violence is a challenge to meeting SDG 5 on gender equality. According to the VNR report, the government signed over 70 cooperation agreements for science, technology and innovation and knowledge exchange over the past two years. It provides examples of cooperation and partnerships between Uzbekistan and India, the Republic of Korea and Germany, among other countries, in this context. In addition to identifying capacity-building needs under specific SDGs, the VNR report points to the need to enhance Uzbekistan's statistical and monitoring and reporting capacity. The VNR report recognizes the lack of development of civil society as a systemic issue.

Uzbekistan plans to factor SDG implementation into the state budget and prioritizes increased finance mobilization through public-private partnerships. The government has implemented numerous trade liberalization measures, concluded free trade agreements with several Commonwealth of Independent States member states, and undertaken efforts to eliminate trade barriers and join the World Trade Organization. Uzbekistan's response to COVID-19 includes measures in the health care sector, expansion of social programs for low-income and vulnerable population groups and efforts to support businesses. These measures are financed through the newly established Anti-crisis Fund.

Measurement and reporting

As noted, a Parliamentary Commission monitors and facilitates SDG implementation. Only half of Uzbekistan's 200 indicators reflecting national priorities have been reported. Work is underway to increase the availability of high-quality, accurate and reliable data, including through the National Strategy on Statistics Development in Uzbekistan in 2020-2025, on the remaining 100 indicators. The government is planning a Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey to gather information on indicators to monitor progress towards national goals and global commitments on improving the situation of women and children. While the VNR report points to the role of parliament in monitoring implementation efforts it does not indicate the frequency of reporting nor does it provide information regarding how reports will be prepared and by whom. Efforts are ongoing to develop a national monitoring and reporting methodology.

ZAMBIA

In 2020, Zambia submitted its first voluntary national review (VNR) report to the United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS

Leadership, governance and institutions

The Zambian parliament plays an active role in promoting the 2030 Agenda at the national level, particularly through the Parliamentary Caucus Committee on the SDGs. Moreover, according to the VNR report, the office of the clerk of the National Assembly promotes coordination between parliament and government (represented by the Ministry of National Development Planning). Still at the national level, the National Development Coordinating Committee, which comprises a wide membership including representatives from cooperating partners, the private sector, trade unions, civil society organizations, academia and youth, has a National SDGs Sub-Committee. This Sub-Committee is responsible for looking over partnerships, data information, monitoring, among other functions.

Stakeholder engagement

The VNR report does not specify mechanisms for stakeholder engagement beyond national consultation processes. It notes that the process of developing a roadmap for 2030 Agenda implementation started in 2017 and that implementation involves engagement by all stakeholders (including both state and non-state actors). However, information is not provided on consultations with non-state actors in preparing the roadmap nor is information available on consultations to identify national priorities.

In terms of engagement on the VNR, a roadmap was widely shared with stakeholders who were also asked to provide material, financial and technical contributions. The Ministry of National Development Planning ensured engagement with government institutions, development partners, academia, youth, the private sector and civil society, including representatives of vulnerable groups. Virtual conferencing was used to validate the report by stakeholders, with the VNR process impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. A draft version of the VNR report was made publicly available on a government web portal as part of validation exercises.

POLICIES

Baseline or gap analysis

According to the VNR report, Zambia examined both policies and data to inform its approach to 2030 Agenda implementation. This included an examination of alignment between the national development plan and the SDGs (75% of applicable SDG targets are fully aligned and 11 percent partially aligned) through a Rapid Integrated Assessment. The government also reviewed baselines and progress on the targets under the five-year plan (which is presented in the VNR report through the goal-by-goal analysis).

Incorporating the SDGs

Zambia's National Vision 2030 integrates the 2030 Agenda. It has the goal of transforming Zambia into a middle-income country by 2030. It is underpinned by five-year National Development Plans with the current plan covering 2017-2021. Sustainable development has also been enshrined in Zambia's 2016 Amended Constitution. The VNR report makes reference to the 2030 Agenda principles of universality and leaving no one behind.

Nationalizing the 2030 Agenda

Zambia's national development plan includes five pillars: 1) economic diversification and job creation, 2) poverty and vulnerability reduction, 3) reducing developmental inequalities, 4) enhancing human development, and 5) creating a conducive governance environment for a diversified and inclusive economy. The VNR report also indicates that national level targets and indicators have been selected as part of the Seventh National Development Plan.

Integration and policy coherence

Zambia reported on a limited set of SDGs, excluding SDG 10 on reduced inequalities (which was seen as cross-cutting with other goals), SDG 12 on responsible consumption and production and SDG 14 on life below water (Zambia is land-locked). Overall, the VNR report had a stronger focus on economic dimensions of sustainable development though linkages were made to different dimensions in the goal-by-goal analysis. Reference to policy coherence in the VNR report pertains largely to coherence between national policies and relevant international agreements, namely the 2030 Agenda, the African Union Agenda 2063, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, Rio+ and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

IMPLEMENTING THE 2030 AGENDA

Leave no one behind

The VNR report refers to a range of groups as at risk of being left behind: orphans and vulnerable children, households affected by HIV and AIDS, elderly, people living with disabilities, the chronically ill, female-headed vulnerable households and small-scale/poor and vulnerable but viable farmers. The National Development Plan includes a pillar aimed at addressing poverty and vulnerabilities and the VNR report points to a range of dedicated programs to support specific groups including through policy and legislative interventions and social protection schemes.

Awareness raising and localization

The VNR report notes that an awareness-raising campaign was carried out to raise capacities for SDG implementation. The campaign included the creation of an SDGs guide prepared in English and translated into the seven main local languages namely. Civil society was involved in the SDG awareness campaigns. According to the VNR report, 2030 Agenda implementation includes involvement of local actors, namely grassroots communities, civil society, local authorities, cooperating partners and government units at various levels. As part of 2030 Agenda implementation, Provincial Development Coordinating Committees, District Development Coordinating Committees and Ward Development Committees are operating through supervisory and implementation roles.

Partnership to realize the SDGs

According to the VNR report, Zambia's parliament discusses the 2030 Agenda and coordinates with the government. A Parliamentary Caucus Committee exists. While civil society has been involved in awareness raising and the private sector is noted for supporting implementation of specific SDGs, the VNR report includes a recognition on the need to better engage stakeholders in implementation as well as monitoring and evaluation.

Means of implementation

The VNR report notes challenges for Zambia with respect to enhancing climate resilience. This is an area in which the country would benefit from learning from others. The VNR report also includes lessons learned to accelerate 2030 Agenda implementation, notably from a Performance Audit of Zambia's Preparedness to Implement the SDGs, particularly around coordination. The VNR report that Zambia is in the process of enacting legislation that will strengthen coordination of the national development plan and the SDGs within the national planning framework and decentralised national planning and budgeting processes. These processes are expected to be participatory in nature. The VNR report mentions official development assistance (which is declining), domestic resources (such as private sector engagement), and foreign resources (such as foreign direct investment) as key sources of financing.

Measurement and reporting

The VNR report includes an overview of the status of data availability for SDG indicators, which is at 34% percent. The VNR report recognizes as need to improve the availability of disaggregated data. The VNR report refers to the creation of a 2019 Monitoring and Evaluation Policy of 2019 aimed at improving information to track progress towards national outcomes, including the SDGs. While the VNR report notes that parliament has played an oversight role in terms of monitoring progress on the SDGs, there is no information provided regarding when national reporting occurs and how.