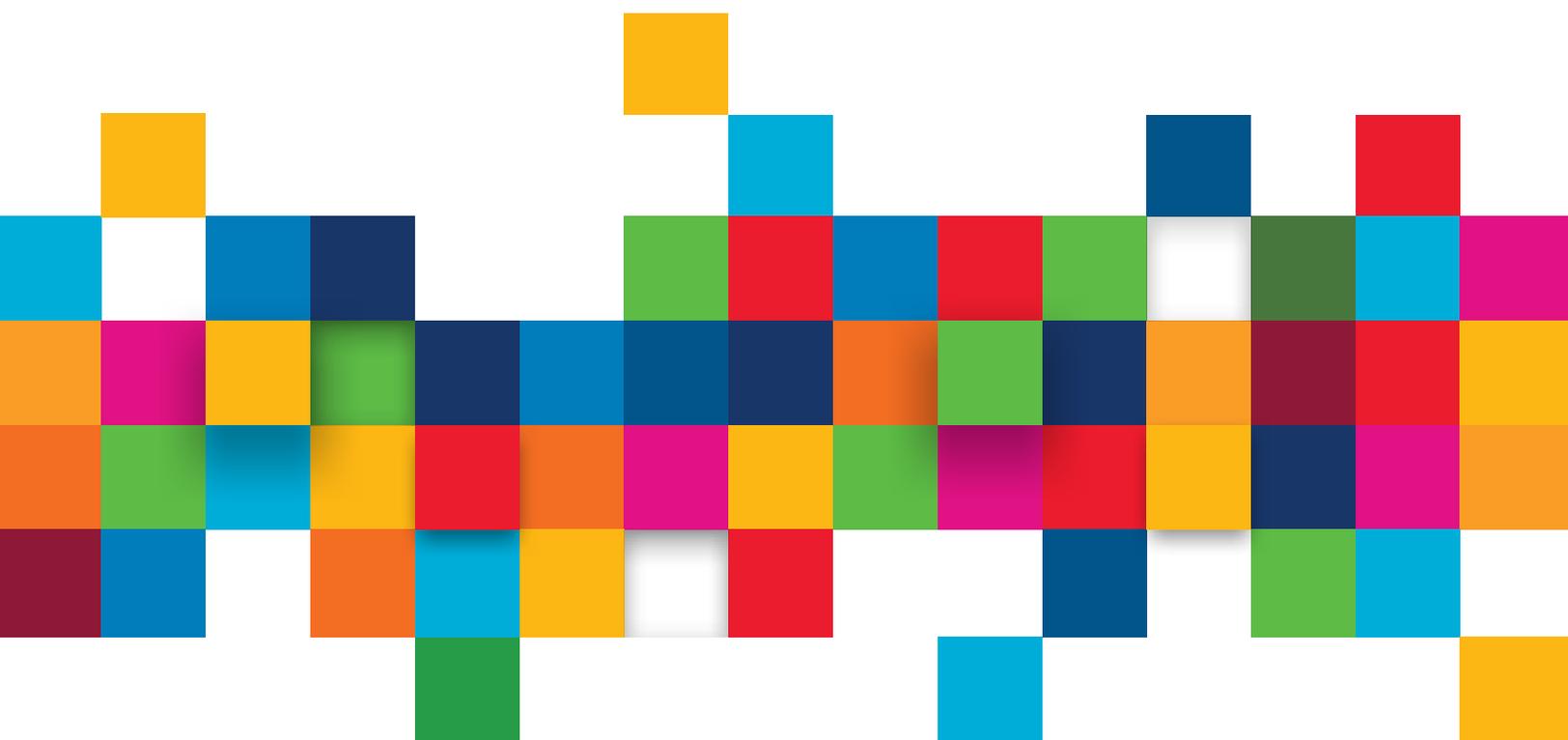# Progressing national SDGs implementation:

An independent assessment of the voluntary national review reports submitted to the United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in 2018

The Third Edition in an annual series commissioned by civil society organisations

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Executive Summary

Four years after the adoption of the <u>2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)</u> in 2015 by world leaders, 2019 marks the end of the first four-year cycle of review. As such there will be two meetings of the United Nations <u>High-level Political Forum</u> (HLPF) on Sustainable Development to examine progress on their implementation in 2019: the Seventh Meeting of the HLPF at the Ministerial level in July under the Economic and Social Council; and a Heads of State and Government level meeting in September under the General Assembly.

The HLPF is mandated to carry out regular, inclusive, state-led and thematic reviews of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, with inputs from other intergovernmental bodies, regional processes, major groups and other stakeholders. Countries present their <u>voluntary national reviews</u> (VNRs) on an annual basis at the HLPF. In 2019, 51 countries will present their VNRs, ten of whom will present their second VNR. <u>The purpose of the follow-up and review process</u> is to promote accountability to citizens, support effective international cooperation and foster exchange of best practice and mutual learning.

This report, the third edition of *Progressing National SDGs Implementation*, aims to provide useful insights and suggestions to inform these discussions and help guide improved implementation and reporting. It documents and analyses all 46 VNR reports submitted in 2018 to the HLPF, as well as a sample of civil society reports also produced in 2018 for the HLPF; and it includes recommendations for improving implementation of the 2030 Agenda the VNR process and reports, and strengthening accountability. The review identifies good and best practices and provides recommendations on how governments, civil society organisations and other stakeholders can improve their efforts. It also provides recommendations on how countries can improve their reporting to the HLPF by meeting and building on the Secretary General's voluntary <u>common reporting guidelines for VNRs</u>. Importantly, the review also provides a comparative assessment of how VNR reporting is evolving over time through a comparison of analysis of the VNRs in 2016 and 2017 with findings for 2018.

The analysis in the review is based largely on the VNR reports, and where available, civil society reports. No additional research was conducted to verify the accuracy and confirm the validity of the information governments included in reports. Where relevant, findings from other assessments of the VNR reports for 2018 have been noted. Nevertheless, this is a clear limitation of the findings.

FORTY-SIX (46) COUNTRIES REPORTING TO THE HLPF IN 2018

Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Australia, Bahamas, Bahrain, Benin, Bhutan, Cabo Verde, Canada, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Greece, Guinea, Hungary, Ireland, Jamaica, Kiribati, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lithuania, Mali, Malta, Mexico, Namibia, Niger, Paraguay, Poland, Qatar, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, Slovakia, Spain, Sri Lanka, State of Palestine, Sudan, Switzerland, Togo, United Arab Emirates, Uruguay, and Viet Nam.

What's new in the 2018 edition

A number of new findings emerge from the 2018 review of VNR reports, though many of the recommendations and best practice from the 2017 edition of this report remain relevant and have been included here. Findings and contributions from the 2018 review of VNR reports that stand out in comparison to the 2017 review include:

GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS

- A significant increase in participation by non-state actors in formal governance mechanisms.

- Principles to ensure timely, open, transparent, informed and iterative stakeholder engagement.

POLICIES

- Inclusion of culture as a national priority for 2030 Agenda implementation, in addition to other dimensions of sustainable development.

- Marked improvement in terms of reporting on all SDGs in 2018; however, there is still limited reference to linkages between the dimensions of sustainable development, a finding that represents a backsliding in comparison to 2017.

MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION

- Improved reporting on the means of implementation – notably international public finance, trade, technology and systemic issues.

- Reporting on best practices increased in 2018, however gaps still remain in terms of reporting on lessons learned or areas in which countries would like to learn from others.

- Limited reporting on leaving no one behind despite the inclusion of this component in the Secretary General's voluntary common reporting guidelines. There is a need for countries to examine the extent to which policies and programmes are addressing the needs of those left behind first.

- The status of local implementation efforts, as highlighted by the 2018 VNR reports, suggests that much more work is needed to promote localisation.

- Marked improvement in reporting on contributions from civil society, parliamentarians, the private sector and academia. However, only a handful of VNR reports still included contributions from non-state actors and local governments throughout.

- A limited number of countries committed to regular reporting on implementation. Through their VNR report, some countries, including two who have reported previously, signalled progress against targets.

USE OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL'S VOLUNTARY COMMON REPORTING GUIDELINES

- VNR reports continue not to be structured according to the outline in the guidelines though they capture most elements, as was the case in 2017. Nevertheless, all elements of the guidelines were included by at least 70% of reporting countries, with the exceptions of leaving no one behind, structural issues and the annexes.

In short, the 2018 VNR reports show that the majority of countries have made progress in terms of incorporating the SDGs into national policies, developing institutional mechanisms for implementation, efforts to build partnerships and/or attention to monitoring and evaluation of progress. This is consistent with the assessment of VNR reports in 2017. However, despite the advances being made, country progress on establishing the building blocks for 2030 Agenda implementation - governance structures, institutional arrangements, policies and means of implementation - by our assessment, still varies substantially across countries. Some countries have made significant progress on some building blocks, but not all, and they still have much to learn from emerging good and best practice. Furthermore, very few countries are actively engaging in the more transformative elements of the 2030 Agenda, such as incorporating the 2030 Agenda principles into policies and approaches, integrating the three dimensions of sustainable development, localising implementation in line with local needs and establishing effective mechanisms for stakeholder engagement and partnership. Progress in these areas, *inter alia*, will truly drive an integrated and sustainable approach to 2030 Agenda implementation and go beyond business as usual. It is our hope that these findings will encourage governments and stakeholders to redouble their efforts, as we believe that the next two years provide a number of key opportunities to address these shortfalls.

Key opportunities to improve VNRs and the HLPF over the next two years

A number of meetings in 2019 will offer an opportunity for stakeholders to commit to accelerating 2030 Agenda implementation. The second meeting of the HLPF in September 2019 will serve as the first summit in a series of Heads of State and Government HLPFs, which are set to occur every four years over the course of the 2030 Agenda. The Summit is meant to reconfirm political commitment to the 2030 Agenda and will reinforce other high level events scheduled for September 2019, namely the 2019 Climate Summit and the High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development. It will result in a "political declaration" that aims to give guidance on how to accelerate implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

The two meetings of the HLPF in 2019 are political moments that present an opportunity to review both process and progress to date on SDG implementation. This report provides comprehensive guidance on how to make progress on implementing the SDGs at the national level - guidance that will help shape and inform the process as countries return to New York in July and September to improve and refine their plans for the coming years of delivery. Critically, this report shows that there is a need for member states to improve the quality of VNR reporting, and as such, the HLPF process. This is particularly important given the planned review of the format and organisation of the HLPF for early 2020. The review of the HLPF is intended to learn lessons from the first four years

of implementation and follow-up and review. It is our expectation that this review of the HLPF will be open and inclusive to all stakeholders. Civil society organisations will provide a number of recommendations based on the detailed findings of this report and its predecessors.

VNR reporting should be improved following the recommendations outlined in this report, recognising that the VNRs serve as an important mechanism for national accountability for 2030 Agenda implementation and the basis for follow-up and review at the HLPF. More time and space should also be given to the presentation and discussion of the VNRs at HLPF meetings – this is essential if the original vision of the positive and constructive follow up and review mechanisms outlined in the 2030 Agenda are to become a reality. Future HLPF meetings should include constructive forums for the meaningful participation of civil society, recognising their valuable contributions to SDG implementation and follow-up and review. Furthermore, future meetings of the HLPF should provide additional opportunities for exchange of views and inclusion of independent assessments, including reports from civil society and expert analysis, which would enable member states to benefit from a wider pool of knowledge. In doing so, it is our hope that the coming years can provide even greater ambition for our collective future.

Findings and recommendations:

Assessment of Governance and Institutional Mechanisms for 2030 Agenda Implementation

LEADERSHIP, GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS

As was the case for VNR reporting in 2017, 2018 VNR reports suggest that institutional mechanisms for implementation and coordination are largely established. Most VNR reports (31) refer to the use of new or existing councils or committees to govern implementation. The most commonly cited leaders for 2030 Agenda implementation include heads of government or state and individual cabinet ministers, although a handful of countries are putting leadership in the hands of multiple cabinet ministers. As in 2017, these governance structures typically oversee and drive national implementation of the 2030 Agenda, including policy alignment, coordination, implementation and monitoring.

In comparison to 2017, formal inclusion of non-state actors in governance arrangements has shown a marked improvement, shifting from a commitment to engage non-state actors, to now actually including them. This marks a small shift towards a more

whole-of-society approach to 2030 Agenda implementation. While the types of non-state actors included in these structures remains wide-ranging, there is a slight drop in the engagement of parliaments in these institutions and a slight increase of local governments relative to the 2017 reports.

Based on these findings, member states may still need to:

- Clearly establish leadership and governance structures to support 2030 Agenda implementation and lay out lines of accountability between various national stakeholders.

- Assign responsibilities for 2030 Agenda implementation across government institutions to create ownership, identify shared responsibilities and ensure transparency and accountability for progress on implementation.

- Formalise non-state actor engagement in governance structures to realise the 2030 Agenda.

ENGAGING PEERS

The 2018 VNR reports signal some movement on participation in regional activities or special country groupings to support regional or sub-regional implementation of the 2030 Agenda. To date these initiatives are focussed on the development of regional frameworks, monitoring initiatives and best practice sharing. The VNR reports continue to make limited references to initiatives that are promoting peer learning and regional follow-up and review.

Based on these findings, member states may still need to:

- Identify opportunities to realise the 2030 Agenda domestically and globally through engagement more formally in regional level initiatives and with like-minded countries. Such engagement offers opportunities to share best practice with and learn lessons from peers.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT IN 2030 AGENDA IMPLEMENTATION

While half of the countries examined (26) consulted with stakeholders around setting national priorities, and almost all (43) engaged groups around the development of their VNR, there are still relatively few examples of formal processes and mechanisms that have been established to allow for more widespread and regular engagement with stakeholders. Such engagement contributes to ongoing awareness raising efforts, national ownership and whole-of-society approaches to implementation. There is a need for countries to report on engagement processes. This review proposes a range of ways that stakeholder engagement could meaningfully be enhanced

in the long-term, including through the adoption of principles for effective and inclusive stakeholder engagement.

Based on these findings, member states may still need to:

- Establish and report on formal mechanisms to ensure regular, inclusive stakeholder engagement on 2030 Agenda implementation. Such mechanisms should support multi-stakeholder dialogue across the SDGs and with different sectors with a wide range of stakeholders, in line with the principles for effective and inclusive stakeholder engagement. This will help to promote greater understanding of shared goals and objectives and potential synergies, build momentum and strengthen partnerships in implementation. Ensuring inclusivity in this context is important to contribute to the leave no one behind agenda.

- Ensure stakeholder engagement on the 2030 Agenda is timely, open, transparent, informed and iterative. This means making use of varied and inclusive approaches to consultation such as online and offline methods; publicising consultation opportunities widely and with appropriate lead time, including at sub-national events in different parts of the country; taking steps to include vulnerable groups and their representatives; and, ensuring that information is available in local languages.

- Include non-state actors in institutional mechanisms or drafting teams responsible for the VNR report.

- Solicit verbal and written inputs from all stakeholders in the preparation of VNR reports and provide stakeholders with an opportunity to review and comment on the first draft. Ensure a formal response to civil society reports.

Policies for 2030 Agenda Implementation

BASELINE OR GAP ANALYSIS

The VNR reports reveal that a majority of countries reporting in 2018 have carried out an assessment of their policies, data or both to inform 2030 Agenda implementation – albeit less countries carried out an assessment relative to 2017.

Based on these findings, member states may still need to:

- Conduct an assessment that identifies gaps in existing policies and programmes, examines data availability, and sets out baselines from which to measure progress and assess where additional efforts are needed.

- Clearly articulate how the assessment was conducted and provide a summary of the gaps identified for each goal.

INCORPORATION OF THE 2030 AGENDA INTO NATIONAL FRAMEWORKS AND POLICIES

Similar to the findings in 2017, most countries have also incorporated the 2030 Agenda into their national policies or prepared a strategy for implementation. As was the case in 2017, VNR reporting for 2018 shows that countries tend to focus on the SDGs rather than the broader 2030 Agenda and its transformative principles. While most countries refer to leaving no one behind (41), substantially fewer refer to inter-generational responsibility (17) and universality (16), and even less to human rights-based approaches (six) and planetary boundaries (three).

Based on these findings, member states may still need to:

- Fully integrate the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs into national plans and strategies based on an evaluation of existing policies, approaches and progress to identify gaps, adapt policies and target areas where further progress is needed. The fact that existing policies already align to the SDGs is not sufficient.

- Operationalise the principles of the 2030 Agenda in approaches to implementation recognising the universal, rights-based and interlinked nature of the agenda. VNR reports should demonstrate how approaches to sustainable development are transforming, based on the principles of the 2030 Agenda and not just the SDGs.

- Inform policies and programmes by efforts to leave no one behind, including by prioritising those most in need to consistently reach marginalised communities.

- Ground plans and strategies in human rights, including by linking activities to international and national human rights commitments and establishing appropriate institutions and mechanisms to support a human rights-based approach to sustainable development.

- Address domestic and global dimensions of sustainable development, and the relationships between them, in efforts to realise the 2030 Agenda, respecting the principle of universality.

- Undertake actions with reference to and respect for planetary boundaries and responsibilities towards future generations.

NATIONALISING THE 2030 AGENDA

While most countries have selected national priorities (and two countries sub-national priorities) that reflect all or most dimensions of sustainable development, the environment was listed less frequently as a priority for countries reporting in 2018 versus 2017.

Conversely, a focus on culture and national identity emerged as a priority for a handful of countries in 2018. The selection of national targets and indicators for implementation remains limited with only seven countries having selected both national targets and indicators.

✅ Based on these findings, member states may still need to:

• Identify national sustainable development priorities. This means addressing all dimensions of sustainable development, recognising the interlinkages between society, the economy, and the environment.

• Develop national and sub-national targets and indicators through an inclusive and participatory process to complement global targets and indicators.

⚙ INTEGRATION AND POLICY COHERENCE

VNR reports show a marked improvement in terms of reporting on all SDGs in 2018 over 2017, with most countries adopting this approach. The majority of countries provided a detailed analysis of their progress on sustainable development and examined all dimensions of sustainable development. However, there is still limited reference to linkages between the dimensions, with countries taking more of a siloed approach in their goal-by-goal analysis. These findings represent a backsliding in comparison to 2017. As in 2017, countries are still not sufficiently ensuring integration in their approaches to 2030 Agenda implementation. In addition, the analysis presented in the assessment of goals in the 2018 VNR reports is similar to what was noted in 2017. Information is provided largely in terms of pre-existing policies and programmes that happen to be aligned with and supportive of progress on the SDGs.

Policy coherence for sustainable development does not feature strongly in reports. Reporting on the impacts of domestic and foreign policies on sustainable development at home and abroad in the goal-by-goal analysis can help prompt greater policy coherence for sustainable development across countries. Most countries do not consistently refer to existing international agreements that support implementation of the 2030 Agenda, such as the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, or internationally agreed aid and development effectiveness principles.

✅ Based on these findings, member states may still need to:

• Assess all 17 goals in their VNR reports, respecting the indivisible nature of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.

• Demonstrate how existing policies, programmes and practices are changing to address gaps and support progress on the 2030 Agenda, in addition to existing approaches that are supportive of the SDGs.

• Ensure all dimensions of sustainable development are addressed in SDG implementation and VNR reporting. Linkages and synergies between the different dimensions of sustainable development should be clearly stated in policies, supported through implementation and included in reporting - all to help ensure clear integration.

• Include a summary of best practice, lessons learned, gaps and priorities, and areas where support is needed in the goal by goal analysis to facilitate learning and global partnership.

• Link implementation of the 2030 Agenda to relevant international agreements that support 2030 Agenda implementation, such as the Paris Agreement on climate change, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and global agreements on aid and international development effectiveness, including in VNR reporting.

Provide an assessment of domestic and global dimensions of sustainable development in the goal-by-goal analysis, demonstrating contributions to realising the SDGs at home and abroad, and supporting policy coherence for sustainable development.

2030 Agenda Implementation
🔁 IMPLEMENTING THE 2030 AGENDA

Most countries have not costed 2030 Agenda implementation, but they have identified public and private domestic and international sources of finance to support implementation, showing a slight improvement in numbers over 2017. More than half of the VNR reports (25) provide no information on inclusion of the SDGs in national budgets or budgeting processes. Five (5) countries provide information on how they have incorporated the SDGs into national budgets and ten countries indicated plans to incorporate the SDGs into budgeting processes.

Reporting has improved on international public finance, trade, technology and systemic issues relative to 2017.

• Information reported on international public finance included the amount of international public finance (such as official development assistance (ODA) or South-South Cooperation) provided, ODA commitments, and challenges facing countries

that have graduated from ODA-eligibility due to income status. Six (6) countries noted challenges resulting from declining ODA flows. Only three countries noted efforts related to improving aid effectiveness. Only two countries noted they would further explore opportunities through South-South Cooperation.

• Countries reporting in 2018 largely focussed on the expansion of trade as a key priority.

• Similar to 2017, countries pointed most to capacity constraints related to 2030 Agenda implementation. This included challenges in monitoring and evaluating the impacts of programmes and changing course as necessary, and challenges in improving coordination.

• More countries reported on technology in 2018 than 2017, focussing on their national investments in this area.

• Finally, there was a marked increase in reporting on systemic issues in 2018 relative to 2017, likely as a result of the inclusion of this focus in the revised Secretary General's common reporting guidelines for the 2018 HLPF. Global financial and economic (in) stability was the most commonly cited systemic issue, followed by efforts to combat illicit capital flows.

With respect to experiences in 2030 Agenda implementation, countries report on their challenges and, to a lesser degree, best practices. Data availability and monitoring progress are the most commonly cited challenges to implementation across VNR reports, followed by mobilising financial resources. This is consistent with findings from the 2017 review of VNR reports.

While there was a notable improvement in reporting on best practices in 2018, with some valuable examples provided, there are still very few countries (14 of 46) who explicitly note their lessons learned or areas in which they would like to learn from others. Equally, more countries could also identify priorities for development partner support. The provision of such information generates understanding of country needs, provides a basis on which to hold stakeholders accountable for their efforts to support 2030 Agenda implementation and assists in the identification of the best entry points for support. This is a gap that undermines the VNR process and creates a missed opportunity for making the most of HLPF discussions. The United Nations needs to explore with member states why there is underreporting on these dimensions, particularly given the focus of the HLPF follow-up and review process on knowledge and lesson sharing.

Based on these findings, member states may still need to:

• Clearly include best practices, lessons learned in accelerating implementation, challenges going forward and where opportunities exist to learn from peers in VNR reports.

• As an essential part of the process, examine national and subnational budgets and start integrating the SDGs into them to ensure that resources are allocated for implementation, building on the good practice in costing out SDG implementation and identifying sources of finance to implement the 2030 Agenda at country level.

• Report on all means of implementation, including clearly specifying capacity constraints. Such information is critical for assessing gaps, including in terms of identifying where greater domestic and international efforts are needed. Member states failed to meaningfully operationalise Millennium Development Goal 8 on global partnership. Member states should ensure that SDG 17 on partnerships for the goals of the SDGs is fully implemented.

• Bolster efforts to support development partners' capacity development priorities, including strengthening statistical systems and the capacities of local stakeholders to implement the 2030 Agenda.

• Scale up efforts to address systemic issues that impact SDG implementation, in particular international peace and security, illicit capital flight, tax avoidance and tax evasion, among other things.

LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND

Even with the inclusion of a component on leaving no one behind in the Secretary General's common reporting guidelines for the 2018 HLPF, only 16 countries provided a detailed account of efforts to leave no one behind. As was the case in 2017, VNR reports provided little information on the status of data to leave no one behind. Women, children and youth, persons with disabilities and elderly people continue to be the most commonly cited groups at risk of being left behind. However, the emphasis placed on different groups changed in 2018, with more countries pointing to persons with disabilities and children and youth, compared to women, which was the top group cited in 2017. Beyond the most common choices of those being left behind, there was tremendous diversity in the different types of people that countries feel are being left behind, a striking increase in 2018 over 2017.

Countries also tended to highlight their existing policies and approaches to leave no one behind, rather than signal the development of new approaches. However, half of reporting countries (23) noted a mix of specialised and universal programmes.

Given that combining universal policies with targeted approaches and strong leadership can be an effective approach to reaching marginalised communities, this is a positive step in the right direction. That said, this is still only the case for half of the countries reporting. Countries also highlighted a range of policies and programmes related to social protection, health, education and other initiatives. Twenty (20) countries noted the development or use of strategies to target specific groups. The findings suggest that countries have yet to adapt new programmes to target those left behind and rely, for the most part, on existing programmes. Overall, there is a need for countries to examine and adapt existing policies and programmes in light of the focus on leaving no one behind, particularly to first examine the extent to which such policies and programmes are addressing the needs of those furthest left behind.

Information on the results of efforts to leave no one behind was in the form of specific figures on the results of programmes and initiatives, and overall trends (including data) or information (without data) on the status of progress. Reporting on efforts to reduce inequality improved substantially in 2018. Countries highlighted the use of policies and strategies to address inequality, followed by social protection.

Finally, efforts to realise gender equality as outlined in the VNR reports centre around legal instruments (31), specific policies and strategies (25), and projects and other benefits that support women (24). The status of gender-disaggregated data is still very mixed across VNR reports.

Based on these findings, member states may still need to:

- Include a specific chapter on leaving no one behind in VNR reporting and demonstrate how the leave no one behind approach is being translated into action in an overarching way.

- Provide information on the status of data collection or plans to improve data availability to inform efforts to leave no one behind. This includes information on gender-disaggregated data. Approaches to gathering qualitative assessments, especially for populations for whom data is not available should also be presented. Such efforts could include engagement with key experts and representatives of marginalised groups. Ensuring no one is left behind means knowing who is being left behind, by how much, and in what areas.

- Highlight existing and planned efforts to leave no one behind, including how policies and programmes are being adapted, and in particular new approaches developed, to first reach the people who are furthest behind.

- Develop a mix of targeted and universal approaches to leaving no one behind, drawing on the latest evidence of what works and best practice.

- Report on the outcomes of efforts to leave no one behind, including by drawing on civil society expertise and citizen-generated data. Clearly present links between specific policies and actions with results.

- Target domestic inequality in 2030 Agenda implementation, including in support of SDG 10 on reduced inequalities, and outline the current status of domestic inequality and how it is being addressed in VNR reports.

- Adopt a range of internationally recognised best practices to promote gender equality, such as gender budgeting, gender-based analysis and mainstreaming into policies and plans, and appropriate legal, policy and institutional frameworks.

AWARENESS RAISING AND LOCALISATION

Fewer countries reported on efforts to raise awareness of the 2030 Agenda in 2018 over 2017. That said, VNR reporting countries in 2018 continued to recognise that awareness-raising is an area for ongoing effort throughout the course of 2030 Agenda implementation and part of public engagement strategies (seven countries specifically noted that more efforts to raise awareness are needed). Countries are making use of a wide range of innovative in-person and online mechanisms, with a number of VNR reports noting the use of the VNR to contribute to awareness-raising efforts.

As was the case in 2017, the VNR reports continue to show a wide variance in terms of where countries and their local governments are in terms of localising the SDGs. That said, reports in 2017 compared to 2018 tended to be more detailed in terms of articulating next steps for localisation and outlining existing activities, including the status of policy development and local institutional structures for implementation. The status of local implementation efforts, as highlighted by the 2018 VNR reports, suggests that much more work is needed to promote localisation.

Based on these findings, member states may still need to:

- Continue to promote, or immediately begin adopting, innovative ways to raise awareness of the SDGs among the general public with a view to long term engagement, including in partnership with civil society and other non-state actors.

- Provide support to sub-national levels of government to raise awareness of the SDGs, strengthen local institutional structures

and resources for implementation, and further develop capacities for local level implementation, including translation of the SDGs into local plans, programmes, and monitoring efforts.

PARTNERSHIP TO REALISE THE SDGS

For the most part, VNR reports stress the important contributions that non-state actors and others play in 2030 Agenda implementation, similar to 2017. Reporting on the contributions from civil society, parliamentarians, the private sector and academia improved in 2018. However, only a handful of VNR reports still included contributions from non-state actors and local governments throughout. VNR reports continue to remain silent on the enabling environment for civil society, and a limited number speak to other challenges that civil society organisations face in contributing to the 2030 Agenda. Nevertheless, the range of activities (in particular, specific projects, awareness raising and promoting accountability, particularly in the areas of independent monitoring of progress) and the variety of roles attributed to civil society organisations in terms of supporting 2030 Agenda implementation expanded in 2018. That said, the predominant focus on projects and awareness raising demonstrates a narrow perception of the roles that civil society organisations play in broader society.

Marginally more VNRs in 2018 (relative to 2017) reported on ways in which parliaments, the private sector and academia are being engaged. The main ways parliamentarians are contributing to the 2030 Agenda include through committee work, the adoption of resolutions in support of implementation, and oversight – similar to what was reported in 2017. For the private sector, VNR reports cited specific projects, company specific commitments and participation in multi-stakeholder partnerships. The most common examples of academic or expert contributions noted in VNR reports related to specific projects, followed by expert analysis. While reporting has improved on the contributions from academics and experts, only half of the VNR reports for 2018 included their contributions. Finally, the provision of finance (official development assistance, finance from international financial institutions and South-South Cooperation) was the most commonly cited role identified by countries for development partners, followed by technical assistance. Interestingly, twice the number of countries (14) than in 2017 explicitly noted that they received support to carry out their VNR, in partnership with the United Nations. With a few notable exceptions, VNR reports continue to not be specific enough to really inform future areas for development partner support and the establishment of partnerships, as was noted in 2017.

Based on these findings, member states may still need to:

- Support civil society to engage in 2030 Agenda implementation by creating a more enabling environment, including through institutionalised dialogue and consultation, inclusion in formal governance arrangements, finance, and capacity development.

- Integrate the 2030 Agenda into parliamentary committee work, recognising the critical role parliamentarians play as citizens' representatives and in ensuring national level accountability for progress.

- Support and develop partnerships with a variety of non-state actors, including academia and the private sector.

- Where relevant, clearly stipulate and provide details on priority areas for support from the international community, laying out the roles development partners can best play to support the acceleration of 2030 Agenda implementation.

MEASUREMENT AND REPORTING

The majority of countries provided information on monitoring and evaluation at the national level, though less countries reported this information in 2018 than in 2017. Information on data availability, including disaggregated data, is often unclear or not articulated, similar to the findings from the review of VNR reports in 2017. Both availability and disaggregation need to be strengthened. Eleven (11) countries noted the use of a dashboard or web portal to report on data, an increase over the five countries noting this approach in 2017.

Fourteen (14) countries noted that they engage in regular reporting. Five (5) countries have given indications of when they will report next to the HLPF, including some who provided a reporting timetable. As in 2017, national reports on progress in 2018 still tend to be government reports, rather than whole-of-society reports. A limited number of countries pointed to the role of parliament in reviewing progress on 2030 Agenda implementation. Some countries, including two who have reported previously, are starting to use their VNR reports to signal progress against targets.

Based on these findings, member states may still need to:

- Report on data availability, including disaggregated data, and country efforts to improve data availability - given the importance of data for SDG monitoring and accountability, as well as leaving no one behind.

- Link reviews of progress for 2030 Agenda implementation to parliamentary oversight mechanisms in order to ensure accountability at the national level.

- Spell out plans to review progress at the national level and be accountable to citizens for progress on the 2030 Agenda beyond reporting to the HLPF. This should include consultation with non-state actors and articulating plans for future HLPF reporting. These elements are important for ensuring accountability for progress on the 2030 Agenda, identifying gaps in implementation, allowing for course correction and ensuring transparency in reporting processes.

- Include an assessment of progress on 2030 Agenda implementation in VNR reports to the HLPF, particularly with reference to the status of implementation in previously submitted VNR reports.

Assessment of VNR Reports against the United Nations Secretary General's Voluntary Common Reporting Guidelines

Similar to 2017, many of the VNR reports are not structured according to the outline in the guidelines though they capture most elements. This can hinder comparison of shared challenges and good practices.

The majority of countries include most elements of the voluntary common reporting guidelines in their VNR reports. All elements of the guidelines were included by at least 70% of reporting countries, with the exceptions of leaving no one behind, structural issues and the annexes. Reporting on these elements was lower.

Despite these missing elements, VNR reports still tend to be very long and in some cases unnecessarily detailed. Repetition was identified as a key issue in the 2017 review of VNR reports, however this was less of an issue for the 2018 VNR reports.

In terms of reporting against the specific sections in the voluntary common reporting guidelines, the review showed the following:

- The VNR reports showed continued growth in terms of inclusion of an opening statement with 38 countries including an opening statement in 2018.

- The majority of reports (33) included a highlights section or captured the main elements of the highlights section in the report, a decrease in comparison to 2017.

- All countries, with the exception of Kiribati and Sudan who both only submitted main messages, included an introduction or the main elements of the introduction in 2018.

- Reporting on the methodology for the review improved in 2018.

- More countries did not include information on creating ownership in 2018 (nine) than in 2017 (three).

- Australia and Singapore were the only countries that did not include information on how the SDGs have been incorporated into national frameworks in 2018.

- A larger proportion of countries reported on how they integrate the three dimensions of sustainable development in the 2018 reports (33 or 72%) compared to previous years.

- Reporting on leaving no one behind could be improved with just under 61% (28 of 46 countries) addressing this component fully or somewhat in their VNR reports.

- Sudan and Singapore were the only countries that did not report on institutional mechanisms in 2018.

- Structural issues, a new component in the guidelines for the 2018 HLPF, were captured by 31 (67%) of the VNR reports for 2018.

- The analysis of goals and targets was met or partially met by all countries in 2018 with the exception of Bahrain, Kiribati, Slovakia, and Sudan. The majority of countries reported on all goals rather than a sub-set of the goals as was the case in 2017.

- More countries provided information on the means of implementation in 2018 than in 2017, however around half of the reporting countries did not follow the instructions as per the guidelines.

- Most countries (34) provided information on next steps in 2018.

- Most VNR reports (37) included a conclusion.

- Over half of the countries reporting in 2018, or 28, included an annex in their VNR report; however only 20 countries met this component as instructed by the guidelines. A number of countries also included annexes with best practice or views from other stakeholders, as suggested by the 2018 voluntary common reporting guidelines.

Based on these findings, member states may still need to:

- Follow, as much as possible, the guidelines as proposed by the Secretary General to ensure that all elements of SDG implementation are captured, and facilitate comparison of shared challenges, good practices and lessons learned.

- Include a statement from a head of state to demonstrate commitment and give profile to the agenda.

- Include highlights as a tool to provide a snapshot of context, the review, integration of the three dimensions, efforts to leave no one behind, best practice, challenges and lessons learned.

- Include an introduction to set the scene and outline components of the VNR report that avoids repetition of the opening statement and executive summary.

- Continue to include the methodology for the VNR, with sufficient details that clearly articulate how the drafting process occurred, timing, how stakeholders were engaged, and lessons learned. This will provide greater clarity on what was done, and how other member states can draw from the experience of different countries.

- Continue to provide information on efforts to raise awareness and foster ownership, in particular key initiatives, successes and lessons learned in this process.

- Continue to provide information on efforts to incorporate the SDGs into national frameworks, in particular key initiatives and successes and lessons learned in this process.

- Make use of the guidance provided by the *Handbook for the Preparation of Voluntary National Reviews* to better assess and report on integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development in VNR reports.

- Report on efforts to leave no one behind as instructed by the voluntary common reporting guidelines, including information on who is being left behind, data, efforts, and results.

- Continue to provide information on institutional mechanisms for 2030 Agenda implementation, including governance arrangements.

- Report on structural issues that hinder progress on 2030 Agenda implementation and approaches to addressing such issues.

- Continue to report on all SDGs with specific attention to trends, gaps, best practice, and lessons learned.

- Repor on progress between first and subsequent VNRs, providing an indication of trends over time.

- Report on the means of implementation as instructed in the guidelines, including domestic finance, resource allocation, budgeting, international public finance, trade, capacity development, technology and partnerships.

- Provide a detailed assessment of the forward-looking agenda, outlining where the country needs to go and the steps to get there, based on gaps and lessons learned to date. This should include next steps in terms of follow-up and review with concrete commitments to be fulfilled by states, strengthening the VNR process and clarifying what stakeholders can expect in the years following VNR reporting at the HLPF.

- Include lessons learned from the VNR process in the conclusion to showcase the value of the VNR process to national and international stakeholders and how it can be improved next time as a result of the lessons learned.

- Include a statistical annex in the VNR report as suggested by the voluntary common reporting guidelines.

- Report on data availability, including disaggregated data, with reference to global and national level indicators, in the statistical annex. This will provide a better picture of countries' overall capacity to monitor SDG implementation.

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1.1 Overview

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted by member states of the United Nations in 2015, serve as a comprehensive, universal, agenda to realise sustainable development in all countries and for the world. The 2030 Agenda is grounded in a promise to ensure no one is left behind in the implementation of the goals and in a set of principles that represent a transformative approach to sustainable development.

PRINCIPLES OF THE 2030 AGENDA

Human-rights based approach

Leaving no one behind and combating inequality

Respecting planetary boundaries and
inter-generational responsibility

Integrated nature of sustainable development and the equal
importance of the economic, social and environmental pillars

Inclusivity, solidarity and participation

Transparency and accountability

The Seventh Meeting of the United Nations High-level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development will convene in July 2019 under the auspices of the United Nations Economic and Social Council. The HLPF is the main global venue for governments, civil society and other stakeholders to share their efforts to implement and monitor the goals – both at a procedural and substantive level. The Forum is mandated to carry out regular, inclusive, state-led and thematic reviews of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, with inputs from other intergovernmental bodies, regional processes, and Major Groups and Other Stakeholders. Countries present voluntary national reviews (VNRs) on an annual basis at the HLPF. The follow-up and review process is meant to promote accountability to citizens,

support effective international cooperation and foster exchange of best practice and mutual learning. [1] To date, ten[2] countries have presented VNRs.[2] In 2019, 51 countries will present their VNR, ten of whom will be presenting their VNRs for a second time.[3]

As part of efforts to ensure accountability for 2030 Agenda implementation, civil society organisations and coalitions from different countries regularly produce their own independent reviews and analysis on their respective governments' implementation of the 2030 Agenda. These civil society reports complement official processes, particularly given that some governments have pursued limited dialogue with non-state actors in their respective VNR process.

This publication documents and analyses all the VNR reports and a sample of civil society reports produced in 2018 for the HLPF.[4] It does so with a view to improving the VNR process and the VNR reports, and strengthening accountability around the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. It identifies best practices in implementation and provides recommendations on how governments, civil society organisations and other stakeholders can improve efforts to implement the SDGs. The report also provides recommendations on how member states can improve their reporting to the HLPF by meeting and building on the Secretary General's voluntary common reporting guidelines for the 2018 VNRs at the HLPF. Importantly, the review looks at how VNR reporting is evolving over time through a comparison of analysis of the VNRs in 2016 and 2017 with findings for 2018.

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1   See United Nations. 2016. *Critical milestones towards coherent, efficient and inclusive follow-up and review at the global level.* Report of the Secretary-General. A/70/684. New York: United Nations. Available at http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/70/684&Lang=E.

2   A number of countries have presented more than one report. Colombia, Egypt, Mexico and Switzerland presented in 2016 and 2018. Benin, Qatar and Uruguay presented in 2017 and 2018. Togo volunteered for 2016, 2017 and 2018.

3   Azerbaijan, Brazil, Chile, El Salvador, France, Guatemala, Indonesia, Philippines, Sierra Leone and Turkey.

4   Details on the methodology, including the analytical framework, used for the assessment of all the VNRs can be found in Annex 2.

1.2 About the 2018 edition

This year's review includes an assessment of all 46 VNR reports submitted in 2018.[5] Although Kiribati and Sudan did not submit a VNR report, they did submit main messages at the HLPF, and have been included here. The box below provides a list of the countries reporting to the HLPF in 2018. Annex 1 also provides an overview of the countries according to region and income level.

Countries reporting to the HLPF in 2018

ALBANIA	ECUADOR	LITHUANIA	SINGAPORE
ANDORRA	EGYPT	MALI	SLOVAKIA
ARMENIA	GREECE	MALTA	SPAIN
AUSTRALIA	GUINEA	MEXICO	SRI LANKA
BAHAMAS	HUNGARY	NAMIBIA	STATE OF PALESTINE
BAHRAIN	IRELAND	NIGER	SUDAN
BENIN	JAMAICA	PARAGUAY	SWITZERLAND
BHUTAN	KIRIBATI	POLAND	TOGO
CABO VERDE	LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC	QATAR	UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
CANADA	LATVIA	ROMANIA	URUGUAY
COLOMBIA	LEBANON	SAUDI ARABIA	VIET NAM
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC		SENEGAL	

5   Though they did not submit full VNR reports, Sudan and Kiribati are included in the data presented below – both in terms of the ten pillars of implementation and the Secretary General's common reporting guidelines – as these countries reported on a number of elements in the assessment framework and on components of the reporting guidelines through their main messages.

Progressing national SDGs implementation

The review follows the assessment framework prepared for the 2017 edition of *Progressing National SDGs Implementation*,[6] and examines countries in terms of ten pillars of implementation. The framework complements the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs' synthesis of VNR reports. It provides greater detail on actions undertaken at the goal level and with respect to specific groups in the context of leaving no one behind, but does not assess VNR reports in terms of best practices and where they could be improved.

LEADERSHIP, GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

BASELINE OR GAP ANALYSIS

INCORPORATION OF THE 2030 AGENDA INTO NATIONAL FRAMEWORKS AND POLICIES

NATIONALISING THE 2030 AGENDA AWARENESS RAISING AND LOCALISATION

INTEGRATION AND POLICY COHERENCE

IMPLEMENTING THE 2030 AGENDA

LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND

PARTNERSHIP TO REALISE THE 2030 AGENDA

MEASUREMENT AND REPORTING

To improve the logic and flow of the report, this year we have organised the ten pillars into three sections focussed on 1) governance and institutional mechanisms, 2) policies, and 3) means of implementation. Components of pillar six on *Raising awareness and creating ownership of the 2030 Agenda* have been split into two according to their relevance to the respective pillars on policy and means of implementation, as shown below.

GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS
- Leadership, governance and institutional mechanisms
- Stakeholder engagement

POLICIES
- Baseline or gap analysis
- Incorporation of the 2030 Agenda into national frameworks and policies
- Nationalising the 2030 Agenda[7]
- Integration and policy coherence

MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION
- Implementing the 2030 Agenda
- Leave no one behind
- Awareness raising and localisation[8]
- Partnership to realise the 2030 Agenda
- Measurement and reporting

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 (as identified above). A number of small changes were made to this year's framework for the review to better capture elements of these principles and other aspects of 2030 Agenda implementation. The changes include additions related to: environmental principles related to the 2030 Agenda; international agreements and frameworks related to the environment and effective development cooperation, more detailed analysis of efforts to leave no one behind, including addressing gender equality; and how governments are budgeting for the SDGs. Overall however, the framework for the 2018 edition is largely identical to the 2017 edition. Annex 2 provides an overview of the assessment framework, highlighting the differences between the 2017 and 2018 assessment frameworks. Finally, data presented in the first three sections of the 2018 edition includes a comparison with the key trends identified in the 2017 report, where appropriate.[9]

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6   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 from the first edition by adding two more that focus on partnerships to realise Agenda 2030 and the means of implementation. It also provided an annex of two-page profiles for the country VNR reports reviewed, a contribution that has continued with this edition (see Annex 3).

7   Part of the raising awareness and creating ownership of the 2030 Agenda pillar of analysis.

8   Part of the raising awareness and creating ownership of the 2030 Agenda pillar of analysis.

9   The 2017 report is referred to throughout, however only cited once here for ease of reading. See Kindornay, Shannon. 2017. *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 2017*. Ottawa: CCIC. The full report can be found at https://ccic.ca/wp-content/uploads/bsk-pdf-manager/2018/05/Full-report-Eng.pdf. Similarly, 2016 edition of this report (Cutter (2016), cited above) is available at https://www.bond.org.uk/sites/default/files/sdgs-9.pdf.

Progressing national SDGs implementation   4

BEST PRACTICE SPOTLIGHT
Assign responsibilities for 2030 Agenda implementation across government institutions. This creates ownership, identifies shared responsibilities and ensures transparency and accountability for progress on implementation.

The fourth section in the review pertains to VNR reporting against the Secretary General's voluntary common reporting guidelines for the 2018 HLPF. It looks at the extent to which countries are following the guidelines and provides a comparison of 2016, 2017 and 2018 VNR reports where possible. In December 2017, the Secretary General's voluntary common reporting guidelines were updated for the 2018 HLPF. [10] The analysis has been updated to reflect these changes.

Finally, this report includes an annex that presents short country profiles for the 46 reporting countries based on the ten pillars of analysis.

Throughout the main sections of this report, good and best practices are highlighted based on government reporting through the VNR reports. All best practice spotlights showcased below are based on reporting or activities carried out by one or more countries reporting in 2018. The good practice case studies provide a more detailed account of efforts by individual countries.

Recommendations are also presented throughout the report. Most of the recommendations made in the 2017 edition of this report remain relevant based on the review of 2018 VNR reports and have been included where relevant. Recommendations from the 2017 review that are not included in this edition remain important however. For example, VNR reports in 2018 did not emphasize the need for development partners to meet the United Nations 0.7% target for official development assistance to gross national income to the same extent as in 2017, nor did they make significant reference to South-South Cooperation and the need to implement trade agreements to benefit developing countries. Accordingly, in the 2017 edition, recommendations were included calling on development partners to meet the United Nations target, provide South-South Cooperation in support of national priorities and implement trade agreements and agendas to benefit developing and developed countries. While these recommendations are still relevant and reflect priorities for civil society and many countries, since they did not feature much in the 2018 reports, they have not been included in the 2018 edition.

The analysis in the review is based largely on the VNR reports, and where available, civil society reports. [11] No additional research was conducted to verify the accuracy and confirm the validity of the information governments included in their reports. Where relevant, findings from other assessments of the VNR reports for 2018 have been noted throughout the report. Nevertheless, this is a clear limitation of the findings.

How to use this report
This review of VNR reports is comprehensive and covers most, if not all, aspects of 2030 Agenda implementation and VNR reporting. The report has a lot to offer governments, civil society, researchers and others interested in understanding the current state of 2030 Agenda implementation and reporting, including good practices.

While stakeholders are encouraged to review the report in its entirety to get a full picture of 2030 Agenda implementation, sub-sections of analysis can be read on a standalone basis, allowing readers to review topics that are of most interest. For governments that are planning to carry out a VNR, this report serves as useful guide to best practices in implementing the VNR and reporting. It also offers a range of examples from which governments can draw in establishing governance and institutional mechanisms, policies, programmes and partnerships to support 2030 Agenda implementation.

For civil society organisations, the content and structure of this report provides a basis for parallel reporting, and highlights the key issues that civil society organisations may want to consider, including to improve their own reporting on 2030 Agenda implementation. The report is also a powerful advocacy tool that can be used to promote the adoption of best practice at the country level.

Finally, the country profiles included in this report provide a simple, short overview of the current status of 2030 Agenda implementation according to the pillars of analysis for reporting countries, serving as a useful reference document.

10 The original guidelines can be found here: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/9768Guidelines from SG report.pdf.

11 Civil society reports are available for 16 of the countries reviewed in 2018, and can be found under "Reports" here: https://action4sd.org/major-groups/hlpf/.

1.3 What's new in the 2018 edition

A number of the main findings from the 2018 review of VNR reports stand out in comparison to the 2017 review. In the area of leadership, governance and institutional mechanisms, the 2018 review revealed a significant increase in participation by non-state actors in formal governance mechanisms that have been established to oversee overall implementation of the 2030 Agenda by, for example, driving policy formation, coordinating across government institutions and assessing progress on implementation. This a significant change from 2017 when most countries only noted a promise to engage non-state actors. While this is a welcome improvement, relatively few reports presented formal mechanisms for stakeholder engagement beyond governance mechanisms. This report proposes a set of principles to improve stakeholder engagement going forward.

Photo: © Greg Armfield / WWF-UK

Policies for 2030 Agenda implementation continue to focus more on the SDGs than the transformative principles of the 2030 Agenda with less than half of the VNR reports referring to inter-generational responsibility (17), universality (16), human rights-based approaches (six) and planetary boundaries (three). The environment was listed less frequently as a priority for countries reporting in 2018 versus 2017 though a handful of countries pointed to a focus on culture and national identify in addition to other dimensions of sustainable development. VNRs show a marked improvement in terms of reporting on all SDGs in 2018 over 2017, however, there is still limited reference to linkages between the dimensions of sustainable development, a finding that represents a backsliding in comparison to 2017.

Progressing national SDGs implementation

Reporting on the means of implementation – notably international public finance, trade, technology and systemic issues – improved in 2018 relative to 2017. Consistent with 2017, data availability and monitoring progress are the most commonly cited challenges to implementation across VNR reports, followed by mobilising financial resources. While reporting on best practices increased in 2018, gaps still remain in terms of reporting on lessons learned or areas in which countries would like to learn from others.

A component on leaving no one behind is included in the Secretary General's voluntary common reporting guidelines. Yet, only 16 countries provided a detailed account of efforts to leave no one behind. Countries tended to highlight their existing policies and approaches to leave no one behind, rather than signal the development of new approaches. Overall, there is a need for countries to first examine the extent to which policies and programmes are addressing the needs of those left behind.

Fewer countries reported on efforts to raise awareness of the 2030 Agenda in 2018 over 2017, however countries continue to recognise that awareness-raising and public education should be ongoing over the course of the 2030 Agenda. The status of local implementation efforts, as highlighted by the 2018 VNR reports, suggests that much more work is needed to promote localisation.

Reporting on the contributions from civil society, parliamentarians, the private sector and academia improved in 2018. However, only a handful of VNR reports still included contributions from non-state actors and local governments throughout.

The majority of countries provided information on monitoring and evaluation at the national level, though less countries reported this information in 2018 than in 2017. Fourteen (14) countries committed to regular reporting. Through their VNR report, some countries, including two who have reported previously, signalled progress against targets.

Finally, with respect to adherence to the Secretary General's voluntary common reporting guidelines, many of the VNR reports are not structured according to the outline in the guidelines though they capture most elements, as was the case in 2017. This can hinder comparison of shared challenges and good practices. Nevertheless, all elements of the guidelines were included by at least 70% of reporting countries, with the exceptions of leaving no one behind, structural issues and the annexes.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES TO IMPROVE VNRS AND THE HLPF OVER THE NEXT TWO YEARS

An additional meeting of the HLPF will also occur with Heads of State and Government at the United Nations General Assembly in September 2019. This Summit will be the first Heads of State and Government HLPF, which are set to occur every four years over the course of the 2030 Agenda. The Summit is meant to provide a key moment to consider progress of the SDGs globally and reconfirm political commitment to the 2030 Agenda. It is reinforced by other related high level events in September 2019, namely the 2019 Climate Summit and the High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development. The Summit will result in a 'political declaration' that aims to give guidance on how to accelerate implementation of the 2030 Agenda, that is being negotiated under the co-chairs of Barbados and Sweden. It is also expected that a review of the process of the HLPF itself will take place following this Summit in 2020. Given the significance of this, this report concludes with some initial suggestions for the proposed review of the HLPF. It provides recommendations from civil society on ways to improve the HLPF process and implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

2.0 Assessment of Governance and Institutional Mechanisms for 2030 Agenda Implementation

Photo: © Pham Bao Son / WWF-Vietnam

Chapter Summary

LEADERSHIP, GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS

As was the case for VNR reporting in 2017, 2018 VNR reports suggest that institutional mechanisms for implementation and coordination are largely established. Most VNR reports (31) refer to the use of new or existing councils or committees to govern implementation. The most commonly cited leaders for 2030 Agenda implementation include heads of government or state and individual cabinet ministers, although a handful of countries are putting leadership in the hands of multiple cabinet ministers. As in 2017, these governance structures are typically overseeing and driving nationalisation of the 2030 Agenda, including policy alignment, coordination, implementation and monitoring.

In comparison to 2017, formal inclusion of non-state actors in governance arrangements has shown a marked improvement, shifting from a commitment to engage non-state actors, to now actually including them. This marks a small shift towards a more whole-of-society approach to 2030 Agenda implementation. While the types of non-state actors included in these structures remains wide-ranging, there is a slight drop in the engagement of parliaments in these institutions and a slight increase of local governments relative to the 2017 reports.

ENGAGING PEERS

The 2018 VNR reports signal some movement on participation in regional activities or special country groupings to support regional or sub-regional implementation of the 2030 Agenda. To date these initiatives are focussed on the development of regional frameworks, monitoring initiatives and best practice sharing. The VNR reports continue to make limited references to initiatives that are promoting peer learning and regional follow-up and review.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

While half of the countries examined (26) consulted with stakeholders around setting national priorities, and almost all (43) engaged groups around the development of their VNR, there are still relatively few examples of formal processes and mechanisms that have been established to allow for more widespread and regular engagement with stakeholders outside of governance mechanisms. Such engagement contributes to ongoing awareness-raising efforts, national ownership and whole-of-society approaches to implementation. There is a need for countries to report on engagement processes. This review proposes a range of ways that stakeholder engagement could meaningfully be enhanced in the long-term, including through the adoption of principles for effective and inclusive stakeholder engagement.

2.1 Leadership, governance and institutional mechanisms

Analysis of leadership, governance and institutional mechanisms provides insights on political commitment to the 2030 Agenda, roles and responsibilities in implementation and lines of accountability. The establishment of governance and institutional mechanisms is a basic building block for effective 2030 Agenda implementation and signals to national and international communities the extent to which governments have institutionalised their efforts towards realising progress on sustainable development. Information on governance arrangements for 2030 Agenda implementation is available in all VNR reports.[12] This is consistent with reporting in 2017 where all countries, with the exception of Curacao, reported on governance arrangements.

2.1.1 Leadership

Leadership for 2030 Agenda implementation provides an indication of the importance ascribed to the 2030 Agenda by governments. Most VNR reports include information on leadership, identifiable through an examination of governance arrangements. Consistent with 2017, countries appear to be taking a wide range of approaches (Figure 1).

Whereas in 2017 the most common leaders for 2030 Agenda implementation were cabinet ministers (14 countries) and implementation bodies outside parliament (11), in 2018 VNR reports pointed to the head of government or state (13) or an individual cabinet minister to provide leadership (ten). Implementation bodies outside parliament were the next most prominent site of leadership for seven countries. Five (5) countries noted that multiple cabinet

FIGURE 1. LEADERSHIP FOR 2030 AGENDA IMPLEMENTATION

FORM OF LEADERSHIP

Head of government or state	12
Individual cabinet minister	10
Multipe cabinet ministers	5
Parliamentary committee	1
Implementation body outside parliament	7
Lead department	4
Other	3
Not articulated in the VNR	4

Number of countries
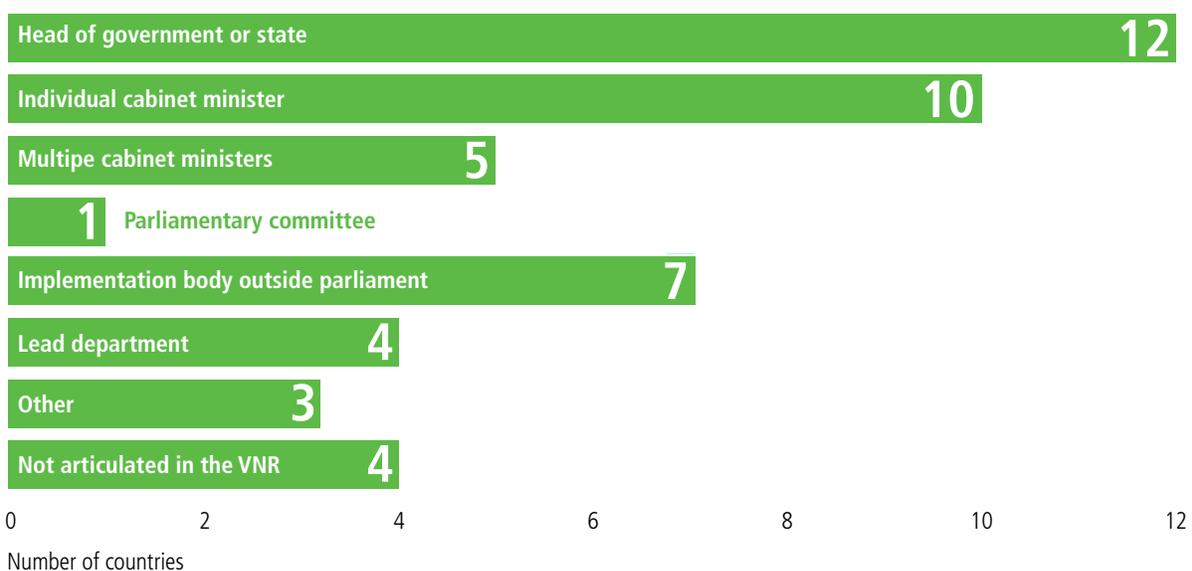
12   The main messages for Sudan include reference to the governance structure but the information is incomplete.

ministers provide leadership for 2030 Agenda implementation.[13] This is a shift from previous years.

2.1.2 Governance arrangements and institutional mechanisms

Given the scale, scope and ambition of the 2030 Agenda, effective governance arrangements and institutional mechanisms are important for orienting and providing impetus for implementation, ensuring policy coherence and coordinating action across government institutions, including at national and sub-national levels. The majority of countries – 32 of 46 – are making use of new or existing councils or committees to govern 2030 Agenda implementation. Thirty-six (36) countries reporting in 2017 noted a similar approach.[14]

Of the 32 countries, 22 created a new council or committee, of which nine countries noted that implementation occurs through government institutions and two noted the use of a lead department for this purpose. Ten (10) countries are making use of existing councils or committees, four of which noted implementation occurs through a lead department (two) or government institutions (two). Three (3) countries referred to implementation through government institutions generally speaking, while another three pointed to a lead department. Five (5) countries made use of other types of governance mechanisms, while information provided in two VNR reports was unclear in terms of articulating the governance mechanism.

As was the case for countries reporting in 2017, the main responsibilities for governing bodies tend to include overseeing and driving nationalisation of the 2030 Agenda, policy alignment, coordination, implementation and monitoring. A number of countries – 13 – also noted the creation of technical and/or substantive working groups or other specialised bodies to support implementation.

VNR reports for Albania, Ireland and the United Arab Emirates provided information on the main government institutions responsible for progress on SDG targets. Albania's VNR report included an institutional map that linked government institutions to specific SDGs, including the number of targets for which an institution is responsible. Ireland provided an annex of the country's SDG Policy Map that assigns each SDG target to a particular department and showcases the relevant national policies linked to that target as well as national policy objectives. Finally the United

Arab Emirates included reference to responsible government institutions in the goal-by-goal analysis of its VNR report.

> **BEST PRACTICE SPOTLIGHT**
> **Assign responsibilities for 2030 Agenda implementation across government institutions. This creates ownership, identifies shared responsibilities and ensures transparency and accountability for progress on implementation.**

A case study in good practice: Including parliament in 2030 Agenda implementation in Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka established the Select Committee of Parliament on the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to review and provide advice on 2030 Agenda implementation, and coordinate activities with Parliament and respective Ministries. The committee includes 15 members of Parliament. It will make recommendations on the formulation of national policies and laws, on the allocation of domestic and international resources, on coordination among government institutions, on networking at national, provincial and local levels, on engagement with non-state actors, and on follow-up and review. The committee also has a mandate to share expertise and experiences at regional and international levels. While civil society organisations in Sri Lanka have noted that knowledge levels among parliamentarians are still low, overall this is a positive start.

Source: Excerpt adapted from Sri Lanka's VNR report.

2.1.3 Non-state actor engagement in governance arrangements

The inclusion of non-state actors in governance arrangements is one indicator of the extent to which countries are adopting whole-of-society approaches to 2030 Agenda implementation. Fourteen (14 of 46) VNR reports did not provide information on non-state actor engagement in governance mechanisms.[15] Information in the VNR report for Uruguay suggests that non-state actors are not included in governance mechanisms. Figures 2 and 3 provide data for 2018 and 2017 on how stakeholders outside government institutions are engaged in governance and institutional mechanisms for implementation according to methods of engagement. Participation in councils, committees or technical working groups that oversee implementation refers to instances in which

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13   Spain and Jamaica are responsible for 'other' forms of leadership in terms of 2030 Agenda implementation. Spain has established a High Commissioner for the 2030 Agenda who reports to the President of the Government and the High Commissioner for Child Poverty. Jamaica adopted a tripartite mechanism comprising three key national focal points: the Planning Institute of Jamaica, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, and the Statistical Institute of Jamaica.

14   Twenty-one (21) countries established a new committee or council and 15 reporting making use of an existing committee or council in 2017.

15   Colombia's 2018 VNR report did not cover this issue, however in its 2016 VNR report, it was noted that civil society can participate in meetings of the lead governance body on 2030 Agenda implementation by invitation only. Data for Colombia is not included in Figure 2.

Progressing national SDGs implementation

the stakeholder is a formal member. Data presented as 'commitment to engage' refers to instances in which no formalised participation has been set out, but there is a well-established expectation of engagement, generally through the mandate of governance mechanisms and institutions carrying out implementation. The category 'other' includes interest groups such as women's organisation.

> **BEST PRACTICE SPOTLIGHT**
> **Formally include non-state actors in governance arrangements. This contributes to inclusivity, and a whole of society approach in 2030 Agenda implementation and the promotion of partnership.**

Figures 2 and 3 suggest an improvement in 2018 over 2017 in terms of the engagement of non-state actors in governance mechanisms.[16] Whereas the most prominent form of engagement was a commitment to engage groups through governance or institutional mechanisms in 2017, countries reporting in 2018 showed a marked increase in terms of actual inclusion of non-state actors in lead councils or committees responsible for 2030 Agenda implementation.[17] With the exception of local government institutions and special interest groups (other), the most prominent form of engagement is formal inclusion in governance mechanisms for all non-state actors. In terms of the actors involved, this includes civil society (17), the private sector (17), academia (eight), trade unions (seven), development partners (six), and youth (four). Countries reporting the inclusion of parliament in governance mechanisms declined from three in 2017 to only one in 2018. Local government (five) and government institutions (15) are also more frequently listed as participating in lead governance mechanisms for 2030 Agenda implementation in comparison to 2017.

The 2018 VNR reports suggest a marked improvement in terms of formal inclusion of representatives from major stakeholder groups. This approach supports whole-of-society ownership over the 2030 Agenda, cross-sector relationship and trust building, and inclusive multi-stakeholder approaches to implementation.

> **🇸🇰 A case study in good practice: Including non-state actors in governance arrangements in Slovakia**
> In Slovakia, the Government Council of the Slovak Republic for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has responsibility for 2030 Agenda implementation. The council coordinates policy development related to sustainable development at national and regional levels, and assesses progress. Chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister for Investment and Informatization, the Government Council includes representatives from relevant government institutions, regional administration, cities and municipalities, employers, trade unions, academia, non-governmental organisations and relevant government advisory bodies. The council is supported by a Working Group for the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the preparation of the National Investment Plan of the Slovak Republic for the years 2018 - 2030. The Working Group has two elements – a Government Chamber that involves the analytical units of line ministries and a Chamber of Stakeholders that includes non-governmental representatives.
>
> Source: Excerpt adapted from Slovakia's VNR report.

2.1.4 Engaging peers on the 2030 Agenda

An important element of the 2030 Agenda is implementation at the regional level, including through engagement with regional organisations, peer learning and regional follow-up and review. Over half of the VNR reports examined – 27 of 46 – did not refer to regional institutions or activities that specifically address the 2030 Agenda.[18] The 19 VNR reports that note participation on the 2030 Agenda at the regional level include a range of initiatives largely aimed at promoting the 2030 Agenda, participation in regional institutions, and the development of regional frameworks for 2030 Agenda implementation, including monitoring frameworks (Table 1). The United Arab Emirates did not include reference to regional activities on the 2030 Agenda in its report, however, the country did note that its flagship event on global issues, the annual World Government Summit (WGS), includes a strong focus on the SDGs. The Summit's "SDGs in Action @ WGS" series has focussed on important issues such as monitoring and reporting, financing and the role of science, technology and innovation.

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16   In 2017, there were limited references to trade unions – captured by the category 'other' along with other interest groups. The general finding that 2018 VNR reports show greater inclusion of non-state actors in lead councils or committees for 2030 Agenda implementation is not impacted by the separation of trade unions from the category 'other.'

17   VNRs are assessed as having a 'commitment to engage' only in instances where non-state actors are not formally included in governance mechanisms. This does not mean that countries have less of a commitment to engage per se, but shows the difference between the number of countries that have formally including non-state actors versus those that have not, but commit to engage with them.

18   Most reports refer to regional activities more generally. In 2017, 25 countries that were examined referred to regional activities.

FIGURE 2. PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS FOR SDG IMPLEMENTATION ACCORDING TO 2018 VNR REPORTS

LEAD COUNCIL OR COMMITTEE   TECHNICAL WORKING GROUPS   COMMITMENT TO ENGAGE

Academia
8 3 4

Civil society
17 5 3

Development partners
6 3 1

General reference to non-state actors
1 1 2

Government institutions
15 5 3

Local government
5 5

Other
4 1 2

Parliament
1

Private sector
17 5 3

Trade unions
7 1 1

Youth
4 1 1

0   5   10   15   20   25
Number of countries
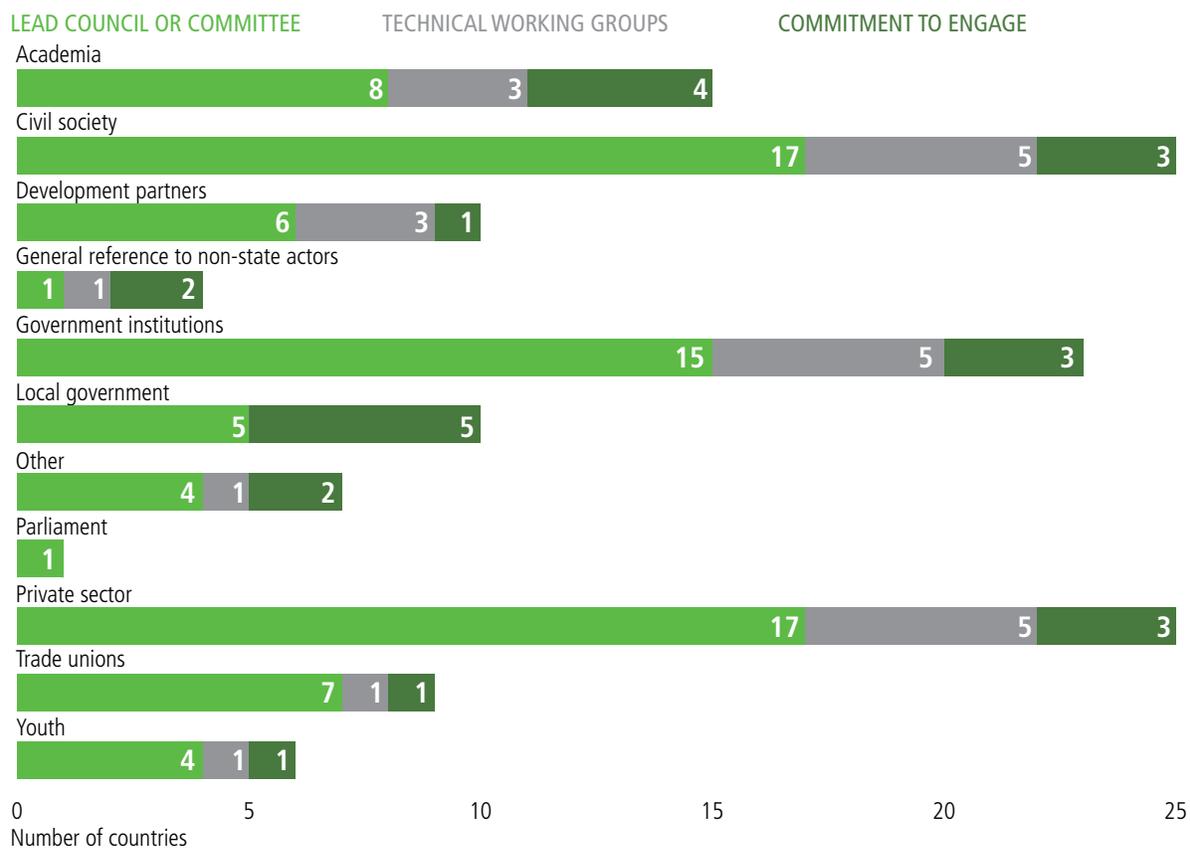
FIGURE 3. PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS FOR SDG IMPLEMENTATION ACCORDING TO 2017 VNR REPORTS

LEAD COUNCIL OR COMMITTEE   TECHNICAL WORKING GROUPS   COMMITMENT TO ENGAGE

Academia
4 5 5

Civil society
6 9 12

Development partners
2 4 3

General reference to non-state actors
1 2 3

Government institutions
2 7 3

Local government
2 1 2

Other
3 4 4

Parliament
3 3

Private sector
6 8 9

Youth
1 2 1

0   5   10   15   20   25   30
Number of countries
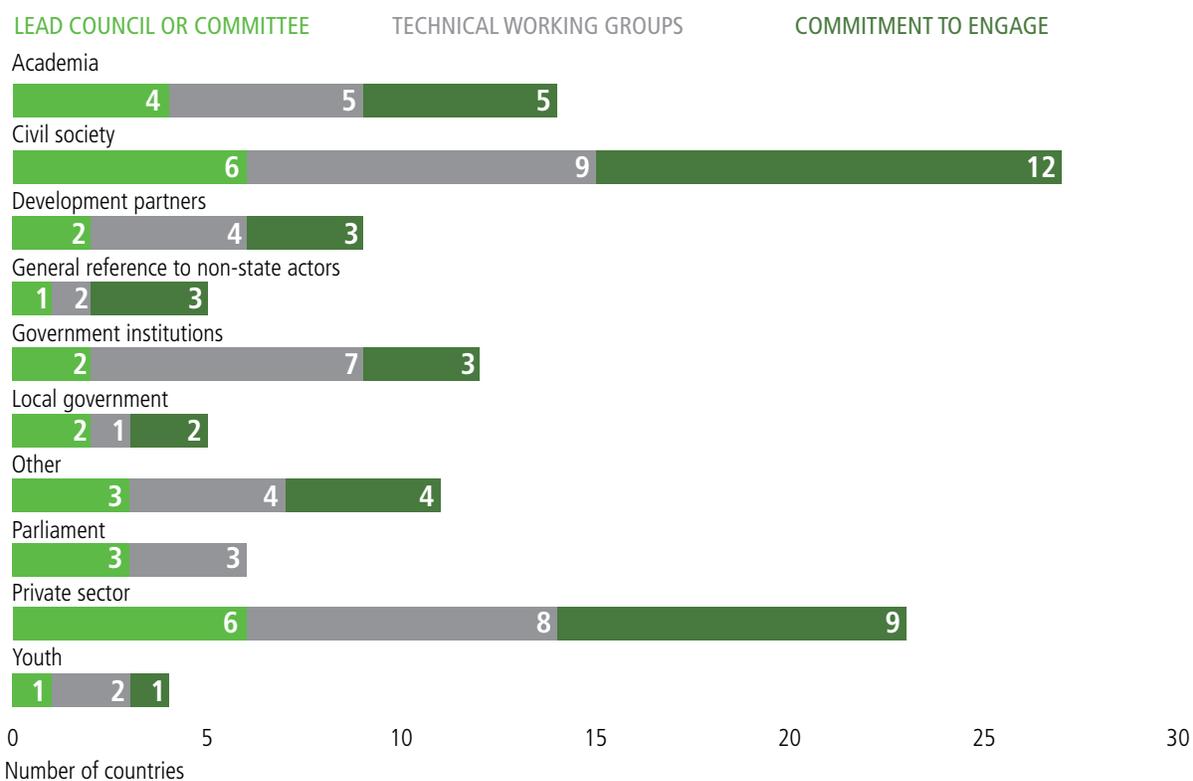
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TABLE 1. REGIONAL ACTIVITIES IN SUPPORT OF 2030 AGENDA IMPLEMENTATION

Activities	Countries	
Contribution to regional position / advocacy on regional priorities for the 2030 Agenda (10 countries)	BAHRAIN CABO VERDE IRELAND JAMAICA MEXICO	ROMANIA SINGAPORE SLOVAKIA SPAIN VIET NAM
Participation in regional 2030 Agenda working groups / technical bodies (6 countries)	AUSTRALIA BAHRAIN JAMAICA[19]	LATVIA STATE OF PALESTINE URUGUAY
Adaptation of the 2030 Agenda for regional implementation (4 countries)	AUSTRALIA MEXICO	SAUDI ARABIA VIET NAM
Regional agreement/projects regarding specific SDGs or sustainable development more generally (4 countries)	GREECE MALTA	MEXICO VIET NAM
Knowledge sharing, including best practice, at regional level (3 countries)	BENIN HUNGARY	ROMANIA[20]
Regional 2030 Agenda indicators (2 countries)	AUSTRALIA	MEXICO

19 Represents the Caribbean on the Inter-Agency Expert Group on SDGs Indicators.

20 Civil society organisations in Romania.

Progressing national SDGs implementation

Only eight countries referred to coordinating on the 2030 Agenda through special country groupings (this figure was ten in 2017) focussed on the needs of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and promoting the SDGs writ-large. Bahrain is advocating for SIDS in relation to their 2030 Agenda priorities. Cabo Verde and the Bahamas each highlighted hosting events on SIDS and the 2030 Agenda. Jamaica is contributing to specific projects that aim to benefit the realisation of the SDGs for SIDS in the Caribbean region, particularly in the area of climate action. Malta has established a Commonwealth Small States Centre of Excellence with the Commonwealth Secretariat. It aims to support smaller states with attaining specific SDGs (SDG 3 on health and well-being, SDG 13 on climate action, SDG 14 on life below water, and SDG 17 on partnerships). Saudi Arabia noted that it will prioritise the SDGs when it hosts the G20 summit in 2020. Slovakia will make the 2030 Agenda a part of its presidency of the Visegrád Four (which is a cultural and political alliance between Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia). Spain is advocating for the 2030 Agenda in the context of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and the G20.

The range of regional activities presented in VNR reports suggests that there has been some movement on regional follow-up and review for the 2030 Agenda, at least in terms of the creation of regional frameworks and indicators. Reference to knowledge sharing activities by some countries also suggests opportunities for peer learning. Nevertheless, the number of reports that refer to peer learning activities and follow-up and review mechanisms are limited. In 2017 no examined country made reference to peer learning and review activities at a regional level in relation to implementation.

BEST PRACTICE SPOTLIGHT
Engage with peers, including at the regional level, as a means to promote learning, establish collaborative initiatives to realise the 2030 Agenda and review progress on implementation.

✅ RECOMMENDATIONS

- Clearly establish leadership and governance structures to support 2030 Agenda implementation and lay out lines of accountability between various national stakeholders.

- Assign responsibilities for 2030 Agenda implementation across government institutions to create ownership, identify shared responsibilities and ensure transparency and accountability for progress on implementation.

- Formalise non-state actor engagement in governance structures to realise the 2030 Agenda.

- Identify opportunities to realise the 2030 Agenda domestically and globally through engagement more formally in regional level initiatives and with like-minded countries. Such engagement offers opportunities to share best practice with and learn lessons from peers.

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💬 2.2 Stakeholder engagement in 2030 Agenda implementation

The multi-stakeholder and inclusive nature of the 2030 Agenda is well established through its emphasis on whole-of-society approaches to implementation and leaving no one behind.

Photo: © Thippakone Thammavongsa / WWF-Laos

2.2.1. Process for stakeholder engagement

Formal arrangements for stakeholder engagement are an element of governance and institutional mechanisms that support participation and input by all stakeholders in 2030 Agenda implementation. Only 18 VNR reports provide information on processes for stakeholder engagement beyond governance mechanisms, or *ad hoc consultations that occurred as a result of the VNR process or the selection of national SDG priorities. Most countries referred to the creation of a specific platform,*[21] annual event,[22] or framework or policy[23] for engagement. Some countries outlined regular, existing channels through which non-state actors can engage the government such as through members of parliament or regular dialogue processes and mechanisms.[24] Albania's VNR report did not note a process for stakeholder engagement, but rather a commitment to engage throughout implementation. Canada's VNR report included information on how the government engages with different stakeholders in the goal-by-goal analysis, but did not articulate how engagement occurs specifically on the 2030 Agenda more broadly. With the information provided in VNR reports, it is not possible to assess the overall quality of stakeholder engagement. The

level of detail on stakeholder engagement mechanisms varies and no VNR report highlighted principles for stakeholder engagement – as was the case for Indonesia in its 2017 VNR report.

> **BEST PRACTICE SPOTLIGHT**
> **Establish and report on formal mechanisms to ensure regular, inclusive stakeholder engagement on 2030 Agenda implementation.**

As noted above, the 2018 VNR reports suggest improvement in terms of non-state actor participation in formal governance arrangements. While these efforts are welcome, the establishment of formal processes and mechanisms that allow for more widespread and regular engagement with stakeholders outside governance mechanisms are important. They contribute to ongoing awareness-raising efforts, national ownership and whole-of-society approaches to implementation. Such mechanisms can also make a positive contribution to leaving no one behind by ensuring that populations that are being left behind, and individuals or the organisations that represent them, are included and supported to engage.

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21 Benin, Greece, Hungary, Poland, Spain, Sri Lanka, and Switzerland.

22 Ireland, United Arab Emirates, Uruguay, and Viet Nam.

23 Benin, Canada (in relation to international cooperation), Greece, Mexico (strategy planned), Sri Lanka, the United Arab Emirates and Uruguay.

24 Lao People's Democratic Republic and Latvia.

🇬🇷 🇱🇻 **A case study in good practice: Formal processes for stakeholder engagement in Greece and Latvia**

Greece and Latvia have both established formal processes for stakeholder engagement on 2030 Agenda implementation. The government of Greece sees engagement mechanisms as critical for promoting shared responsibility for 2030 Agenda implementation and collaboration across sectors, and for ensuring that the central government is working with the best advice and recommendations for implementation. The government is making use of its constitutionally established Economic and Social Committee of Greece to promote consultation and dialogue on the SDGs. The Committee is responsible for social dialogue in the country on issues related to the economy and society and operates under a tripartite structure representing the interests of employers and entrepreneurs, public and private sector employees, and other interest groups. The committee makes use of thematic working groups, an Executive Committee and a General Assembly to prepare policy proposals on a range of issues related to the SDGs. The committee prepared a proposal for the government on national priorities for 2030 Agenda implementation and a set of proposals for effective implementation across sectors and at different levels (e.g. national, regional, and local). The Economic and Social Committee of Greece also carries out other activities to raise public awareness of the 2030 Agenda, such as conferences and other events.

Latvia has a range of mechanisms for stakeholder engagement and consultation. The public can participate in policymaking by providing inputs into problem identification, preparation of planning documents and supporting policy implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Public consultations offer an opportunity for the public – individuals and organisations – to join informal and formal working groups, advisory councils and other forums. They can also send written opinions to the government. Draft documents are published for comment on ministry websites under a section entitled "Public Participation." Latvia considers its procedure for achieving consensus on development planning as best practice. In addition, any stakeholder can submit proposals to the government and receive responses. A citizens' engagement website exists for this purpose - ManaBalss.lv. Parliament also has an obligation to consider a particular issue if a certain number of signatures are collected. For the VNR, Latvia established an informal advisory working group that included representatives from government, the Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments, the private sector, civil society, the United Nations and trade unions.

Source: Except adapted from the VNR reports for Greece and Latvia.

A number of civil society reports prepared for the HLPF (discussed further below) commented on the issue of stakeholder engagement. Civil society reports for Canada, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Hungary, Ireland, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Sri Lanka and Switzerland suggested there is a need for respective governments to improve their engagement with non-state actors. A number of reports provided details in terms of what more effective engagement might entail.

- Civil society organisations in **Colombia** have called for increased dialogue, coordination and joint implementation of SDG initiatives between government, civil society and the private sector, particularly at sub-national levels.

- In the **Dominican Republic**, there is a need to establish mechanisms to improve the effective participation of civil society in different stages of 2030 Agenda implementation. A strengthened communication strategy is also needed, supported by actions to socialise stakeholders on the 2030 Agenda.

- For **Hungary**, civil society organisations called for the following: establishment of an institutional system of public participation including access to information; wide public communication; active involvement of all partners in implementation, including through better sharing of documents for review by non-state actors; and, continuous direct participation by stakeholders through working groups that include non-state actors and address planning, monitoring and reporting on 2030 Agenda implementation.

- Civil society organisations in **Ireland** called on the government to ensure that the country's newly established National Stakeholder Forum is guided by a clear mandate and facilitates robust participation. They also criticised the government for providing insufficient lead time to fully engage in the VNR ahead of the HLPF or provide input into the country's national implementation plan for the 2030 Agenda.

- In the **Lao People's Democratic Republic**, participation in the VNR was limited, with only selected civil society organisations invited to participate and informal channels used to solicit comments from civil society. The civil society report called for the establishment of a formal, institutionalised engagement mechanism, with invitations channeled through the Lao CSO Coordinating Office to facilitate a selection process for participation by civil society organisations. The report noted that meaningful and inclusive participation requires civil society engagement in all stages of 2030 Agenda implementation, including policy and legislative development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation and reporting.

Progressing national SDGs implementation

- The government of **Sri Lanka** set up a National Sustainable Development Platform in 2016 that engaged stakeholders in the development of the country's National SDG Action Plan (2017-20). However, despite its success, the government abandoned the platform in 2017. According to the civil society report, the absence of such a platform led to a bureaucratic decision-making process for the VNR, rather than an inclusive process.

- Civil society organisations in **Switzerland** have called on the government to ensure full, effective and equal participation of all people in efforts to realise sustainable development, including through the establishment of new forms and mechanisms of participation and by guaranteeing access to information.

Other civil society reports flagged different concerns and developments. The Bhutan civil society report noted that regular policy dialogue has not been possible given that civil society and the government are guided by their own different visions. Mexico and Togo, on the other hand, has seen improvements in collaboration between civil society and the government according to civil society reports. The second VNR saw greater opportunities for consultation in Mexico – both face-to-face and virtual – in comparison to the first VNR. In Togo, civil society was involved in all phases of the preparation of the 2018 VNR, including the launch phase of the process, information gathering and validation of the report. Civil society organisations were also involved in the drafting phase of the 2018 VNR report through their participation in a drafting retreat.

Going forward, to enhance the quality and long-term engagement of civil society in these processes, governments will need to make use of principles for effective stakeholder engagement. Stakeholder engagement and consultation should centre around five core elements that support meaningful engagement of civil society, as outlined in Figure 4 below.[25] Engagement should occur within a broader context of fostering an enabling environment for civil society through supportive policy and legislation, institutionalised engagement and predictable and diverse funding. Recognising that the capacity for stakeholder engagement varies by country, there is also a role for development partners to support developing countries in this context.

Photo: © WWF / Simon Rawles

25   Adapted from *A Code of Good Practice on Policy Dialogue*, Voluntary Sector Initiative (Canada, 2002). Available at http://www.vsi-isbc.org/eng/policy/pdf/codes_policy.pdf.

FIGURE 4. DRAFT PRINCIPLES FOR EFFECTIVE AND MEANINGFUL STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT IN 2030 AGENDA IMPLEMENTATION

TIMELY Provide sufficient notice provided and hold consultations within relevant time frames

- Clearly articulate consultation timelines at the outset of stakeholder engagmeent on national priorities, policies and all phases of the VNR.

- Prepare draft documents well in advance of deadlines for finalisation to ensure sufficient lead time for comments and inputs from stakeholders.

OPEN Enhance equal opportunity for access and use of effective models

- Undertake efforts to facilitate accessible and robust participation, particularly for diverse populations and left behind groups, in addition to established civil society organisations.

- Provide opportunities for engagement across regions and territories to ensure inclusivity.

- Provide online consultations as well as face-to-face meetings.

- Respect the right of stakeholders to self-organise and incorporate representative organisations for non-state actors (e.g. civil society platforms/umbrella groups; private sector associations; national trade union bodies, etc.).

- Make information available in local languages.

TRANSPARENT Communicate a clear process and purpose, and provide feedback to participants

- Esnure information about the process is publicly shared through communication channels including websites and social media.

- Ensure access to information and share documentation.

- Clearly establish opportunities for engagement for all stages in policy and legislative development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and reporting.

INFORMED Provide comprehensive preparatory and follow-up documentation to detail current approach and how inputs have been considered

- Ensure 2030 Agenda implementation is informed by a strategy for effective stakeholder engagement that sets out a clear mandate, policy, mechanisms, and expectations and desired outcomes.

- Provide documentation in advance of meetings to allow proper preparation by stakeholders.

- Provide documentation on the outcomes of stakeholder engagement in a timely manner, including with reference to how inputs have been considered and used.

ITERATIVE Ensure an ongoing process

- Establish institutionalised mechanisms for meaningful public engagement.

- Ensure that there are opportunities for dialogue, feedback and meaningful input, as opposed to one-way reporting.

2.2.2 Consultation on defining national priorities

Part of a whole-of-society approach to 2030 Agenda implementation is developing a shared, national vision for implementation that reflects priorities from stakeholders across society. This approach supports broad-based, democratic ownership over the nationalisation process. Though less than half of the VNR reports referred to formal stakeholder engagement mechanisms, more than half provided information on consultation processes for defining national priorities and in the VNR.

For the 26 (of 46) VNR reports that noted consultations with non-state actors took place on the selection of national priorities, consultations occurred largely in online and offline forms.[26] VNR reports provided varying degrees of detail in terms of consultation processes. Some provided a full account of consultation events and those involved; others provided more of a general overview, asserting that consultations had occurred with a broad cross-section of non-state actors. Eleven (11) VNR reports did not provide information on whether non-state actors were consulted in the selection of national priorities.[27] Canada was the only country that did not consult stakeholders on the national priorities outlined in its VNR report, however the country plans to establish additional priorities with consultation on a national strategy that will inform the selection of national SDG indicators. Eight (8) VNR report did not set out national priorities.[28]

> **BEST PRACTICE SPOTLIGHT**
> **Ensure inclusivity and participation in the nationalisation of the SDGs, including the creation of national targets and indicators, in line with the principles of the 2030 Agenda.**

2.2.3 Consultation in the preparation of VNRs

The 2030 Agenda includes a commitment to participatory follow-up and review. The 2019 edition of the Handbook for the Preparation of Voluntary National Reviews provides guidance to countries on multi-stakeholder engagement, emphasizing the importance of open, inclusive and participatory VNRs.

The majority of countries (43 of 46) reported that non-state actors were engaged in the VNR. This is an improvement over 2017 where only 34 of the 45 countries examined included this information in their VNR report. Canada is the only country that did not articulate if non-state actors were engaged in the VNR process (although a civil society report notes that the government solicited vignettes in their VNR for inclusion from non-state actors). The status of non-state actor engagement in the VNR is unclear for Guinea and Niger. Guinea's report notes that a consultation workshop took place and was attended by various stakeholders, but is unclear on who the stakeholders where. Niger's report notes that the VNR was conducted in a participatory manner, but provides no information on engagement with non-state actors.

> **BEST PRACTICE SPOTLIGHT**
> **Solicit verbal and written inputs from all stakeholders in the preparation of VNR reports and provide stakeholders with an opportunity to review and comment on the first draft through public consultation.**

> **A case study in good practice: Including non-state actors in the VNR process in the State of Palestine**
> The State of Palestine took efforts to ensure multi-stakeholder consultation and participation in the VNR. According to the VNR report, more than 500 mid-level and high-level representatives from government, the United Nations, local and international non-governmental organisations, civil society, academia and the private sector participated in the VNR. The Prime Minister's Office led the VNR process and was supported by a steering committee of senior officials and a National SDGs Team. The National SDGs Team includes 24 representatives from government, civil society and the private sector.
>
> Source: Except adapted from the State of Palestine's VNR report.

As with the case of consultations on national priorities, most countries made use of offline and online consultation formats. Andorra provided stakeholders with a chance to review and comment on the VNR report. Greece collected direct written contributions for the VNR report from non-state actors. Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, the State of Palestine established

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26 In 2017, six VNR reports did not provide information on whether non-state actors were consulted in the selection of national priorities, three countries did not consult non-state actors and 31 countries consulted non-state actors.

27 The Bahamas, Colombia, Ecuador, Guinea, Niger, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sri Lanka, Switzerland, and Viet Nam.

28 Albania, Armenia (the country is updating its current national development strategy through a participatory process), Australia, Lebanon, Malta, Mexico (a national consultation is underway on a new National Strategy for the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda), Singapore, and Sudan.

VNR working groups or committees or made use of existing governance structures for 2030 Agenda implementation that included representation by non-state actors to draft the VNR report. Information presented in the 2018 VNR reports suggests the use of similar approaches to what was reported in 2017.

> **BEST PRACTICE SPOTLIGHT**
> **Include non-state actors in institutional mechanisms responsible for the VNR and drafting the VNR report.**

A case study in good practice: Ensuring broad stakeholder engagement on the VNR through public consultation in Poland's VNR

In addition to the creation of a task team with non-state actor representation to facilitate the VNR, Poland's VNR process included a number of opportunities for broad public consultation. Over a three-week period in April 2018, the VNR report underwent inter-ministerial and public consultations. The public consultations included online and offline elements. A dedicated form was available for stakeholders to submit comments through the government website that hosted a draft version of the VNR report. The government also purposefully submitted the draft report to social partners to solicit their feedback. A draft version of the VNR report was also submitted to local government institutions as well as a Social Dialogue Council for review. Selected Parliamentary Committees also reviewed the draft VNR report.

Source: Except adapted from the Poland's VNR

2.2.4 Civil society reports

In addition to engagement through the VNR, civil society organisations in a number of countries produced parallel reports for the HLPF. These reports provide independent analyses of progress on 2030 Agenda implementation and offer validity checks on the information presented in national VNR reports. The authors of this review identified 16 civil society reports for the 2018 HLPF.[29] The reports are in the form of submissions to respective governments as part of the VNR process, shadow reports and spotlight reports. One of the reports – for Bhutan – was a response to the survey prepared by Action for Sustainable Development. In addition, Hungary and Malta included contributions from civil society in their VNR reports.

> **BEST PRACTICE SPOTLIGHT**
> **Produce a civil society report on VNRs, which does the following: provides an assessment of 2030 Agenda implementation at the country level and government efforts; information on civil society initiatives, including the challenges that non-state actors face to contributing to the 2030 Agenda; and, an independent assessment of progress on the SDGs.**

Generally speaking, the civil society reports broadly support the evidence presented in the VNR reports, with some exceptions as identified in the country profiles in Annex 3. Civil society reports tend to argue that respective governments should be taking greater steps to leave no one behind and call for greater engagement and partnership with civil society. It would be helpful to ensure an official process for responses to civil society reports and suggestions.

29   Bhutan, Canada, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ireland, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Mexico, Senegal, Spain, Sri Lanka, State of Palestine, Sudan, Switzerland, Togo, and Viet Nam. All reports available at: https://action4sd.org/major-groups/hlpf/ under the "Report" tab.

Progressing national SDGs implementation

🦁 A case study in good practice: Civil society reporting on the VNR in Sri Lanka

The Sri Lanka Stakeholder SDG Platform, an umbrella platform established in March 2018 representing a collective of civil society organisations, the private sector, academia, professional associations, and trade unions, prepared a Voluntary Peoples Review on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Platform was launched in response to insufficient stakeholder engagement during the VNR process. The resulting report, based on contributions from over 500 experts, activist and researchers and representatives from more than 100 organisations, provides a frank assessment of Sri Lanka's implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The report includes a report card that assesses implementation of the SDGs through a traffic light system. The report examines: awareness-raising and capacity to implement the SDGs (including for different stakeholders); institutional mechanisms and coordination; policy coherence and the national SDG framework; integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development; the science-policy interface; localising the SDGs; stakeholder engagement; means of implementation; and monitoring, review, reporting and follow-up mechanisms. The report includes a more detailed assessment of the policy and enabling environment for implementation of the 2030 Agenda, which broadly captures the key elements in the Secretary General's common reporting guidelines. A traffic light assessment of efforts by the government to ensure policy coherence for sustainable development is also available, grounded in the framework developed by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. A report card on the state of resilience is also included to assess resilience related SDG targets as part of the report's analysis of the 2018 HLPF theme, *Transformation towards Sustainable and Resilient Societies*. The report evaluates Sri Lanka's performance on individual SDG targets for all 17 SDGs, again through a traffic light system, coupled with a narrative around progress and key challenges. Finally, the report includes a chapter on leaving no one behind that showcases the concerns of individuals raised through the consultation process for the Voluntary Peoples Review.

Source: Sri Lanka Stakeholder SDG Platform (2018).[30]

✅ RECOMMENDATIONS

- Establish and report on formal mechanisms to ensure regular, inclusive stakeholder engagement on 2030 Agenda implementation. Such mechanisms should support multi-stakeholder dialogue across the SDGs and with different sectors with a wide range of stakeholders, in line with the principles for effective and inclusive stakeholder engagement. This will help to promote greater understanding of shared goals and objectives and potential synergies, build momentum and strengthen partnerships in implementation. Ensuring inclusivity in this context is important to contribute to the leave no one behind agenda.

- Ensure stakeholder engagement on the 2030 Agenda is timely, open, transparent, informed and iterative. This means making use of varied and inclusive approaches to consultation such as online and offline methods; publicising consultation opportunities widely and with appropriate lead time, including at sub-national events in different parts of the country; taking steps to include marginalised groups and their representatives; and, ensuring that information is available in local languages.

- Include non-state actors in institutional mechanisms or drafting teams responsible for the VNR report.

- Solicit verbal and written inputs from all stakeholders in the preparation of VNR reports and provide stakeholders with an opportunity to review and comment on the first draft. Ensure a formal response to civil society reports.

30   Sri Lanka Stakeholder SDG Platform. 2018. *Sri Lanka Voluntary Peoples Review on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. Colombo, Sri Lank Stakeholder SDG Platform. https://action4sd.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/SRI-LANKA-Voluntary-Peoples-Review-on-the-SDGs-to-HLPF-2018.pdf

3.0 Policies for 2030 Agenda Implementation

Photo: © naturepl.com / Bryan and Cherry Alexander / WWF

Chapter Summary

BASELINE OR GAP ANALYSIS

The VNR reports reveal that a majority of countries reporting in 2018 have carried out an assessment of their policies, data or both to inform 2030 Agenda implementation – albeit less countries carried out an assessment relative to 2017.

INCORPORATION OF THE 2030 AGENDA INTO NATIONAL FRAMEWORKS AND POLICIES

Similar to the findings in 2017, most countries have also incorporated the 2030 Agenda into their national policies or prepared a strategy for implementation. As was the case in 2017, VNR reporting for 2018 shows that countries tend to focus on the SDGs rather than the broader 2030 Agenda and its transformative principles. While most countries refer to leaving no one behind (41), substantially less refer to inter-generational responsibility (17) and universality (16), and even less to human rights-based approaches (six) and planetary boundaries (three).

NATIONALISING THE 2030 AGENDA

While most countries have selected national priorities (and two countries sub-national priorities) that reflect all or most dimensions of sustainable development, the environment was listed less frequently as a priority for countries reporting in 2018 versus 2017. Conversely, a focus on culture and national identify emerged as a priority for a handful of countries in 2018. The selection of national targets and indicators for implementation remains limited with only seven countries having selected both national targets and indicators.

INTEGRATION AND POLICY COHERENCE

VNR reports show a marked improvement in terms of reporting on all SDGs in 2018 over 2017, with most countries adopting this approach. The majority of countries provided a detailed analysis of their progress on sustainable development and examined all dimensions of sustainable development. However, there is still limited reference to linkages between the dimensions, with countries taking more of a siloed approach in their goal-by-goal analysis. These findings represent a backsliding in comparison to 2017. As in 2017, countries are still not sufficiently ensuring integration in their approaches to 2030 Agenda implementation. In addition, the analysis presented in the assessment of goals in the 2018 VNR reports is similar to what was noted in 2017. Information is provided largely in terms of pre-existing policies and programmes that happen to be aligned with and supportive of progress on the SDGs.

Policy coherence for sustainable development does not feature strongly in reports. Reporting on the impacts of domestic and foreign policies on sustainable development at home and abroad in the goal-by-goal analysis can help prompt greater policy coherence for sustainable development across countries. Most countries do not consistently refer to existing international agreements that support implementation of the 2030 Agenda, such as the Paris Agreement on climate change, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, or internationally agreed aid and development effectiveness principles.

3.1 Baseline or gap analysis

The preparation of baseline or gap analyses are critical to informing policy priorities for 2030 Agenda implementation.

3.1.1 Status of assessments

Baseline or gap analyses help ground approaches to 2030 Agenda implementation in real, evidence-based gaps in progress, data and policies and programmes. As shown in Figure 5, most countries (32 of 46, or 69.5%) noted that they carried out some kind of assessment of the SDGs (or some SDGs), or plan to carry out an assessment.[31] This is down from 2017, in which the review of 45 VNR reporting countries showed that 38 countries had either prepared an assessment (33 countries) or planned to carry one out (5 countries). In 2016, this figure was ten of 16 (or 62.5%) countries examined. For 2018, 12 countries did not provide information on a baseline or gap assessment.[32]

FIGURE 5. GAP OR BASELINE ANALYSIS
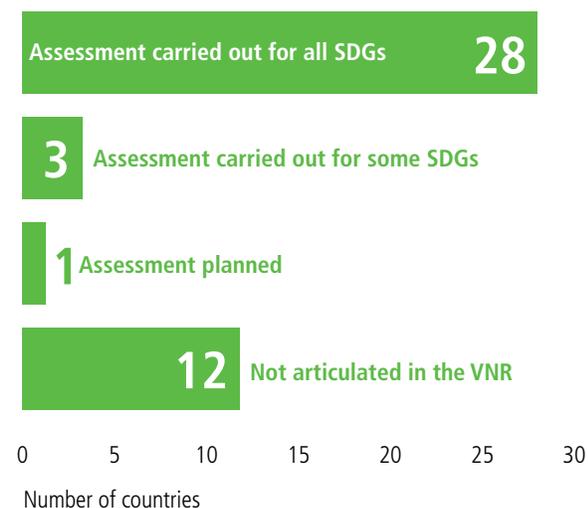
The government found that 14 of the 17 SDGs have been aligned and integrated with the achievement of the country's 16 National Key Results Areas in the 11th Five Year Plan. A Rapid Integrated Assessment was also conducted by the United Nations Development Programme which similarly revealed high levels of integration between the 11th Five Year Plan and the 169 SDG targets.

In terms of measuring progress, the government assessed alignment between SDG indicators and existing indicators used by the country, including on data availability with respect to these indicators. Bhutan's report classifies SDG indicators in terms of whether they have been fully adopted, partially adopted, are relevant but not adopted or not relevant to Bhutan's context. The government then classified data availability against the SDG indicators in terms of whether data is available (regularly collected according to high standards), partially available (data available on an *ad hoc* basis) or not available. Finally, Bhutan's VNR report included an assessment of progress towards each goal in terms of whether SDG targets have been achieved, are on track or at risk. The goal-by-goal analysis in the report provided the status of each SDG, with a candid summary of progress and challenges.

Source: Except adapted from Bhutan's VNR report.

3.1.2 Content of baseline or gap assessments

The content of assessments shows whether countries are assessing policies and/or data to inform 2030 Agenda implementation. As shown in Figure 6, 32 countries (of 46) provided information on the content of their assessments. The degree to which assessments were detailed varied, though generally speaking, what was assessed was clear. Similar to findings in 2017, the 2018 VNR reports revealed three main types of assessments – mapping of country policies

🌏 **A case study in good practice: Assessing policies, data availability and progress in Bhutan**
Bhutan reviewed policies and data to examine alignment and integration between the country's 11th Five Year Plan (2013-18) and the 17 SDGs, as well as progress on implementation.

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31 The European Union has resisted developing a gap analysis for quite some time but has recently expressed its intention to develop a "distance analysis" to identify how far the current policy reality is from the SDG target.

32 The Bahamas (the report notes a capacity assessment of government institutions will be carried out to examine resource gaps for SDG implementation), Canada (though the report notes that government departments have been asked to examine how they can better incorporate the SDGs and the statistical annex includes baselines and information on data availability), Colombia (the 2016 VNR report noted the country takes a "closing gaps" approach and also noted the availability of data for follow-up, however no information was presented in the 2018 VNR report), Lebanon, Malta, Mexico (although baselines are provided in the statistical annex), Paraguay, Qatar, Romania, Singapore, Sudan, and Uruguay (the report notes that baselines have been established but provides no further information).

FIGURE 6. TYPES OF SDG BASELINE AND GAP ASSESSMENTS LISTED IN VNR REPORTS

ASSESSMENT OF DATA AVAILABILITY AND/OR BASELINE ESTABLISHMENT
7 COUNTRIES
AUSTRALIA, CABO VERDE, EGYPT, LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC (PLANNED), NAMIBIA, STATE OF PALESTINE, AND VIET NAM

POLICY AND DATA ASSESSMENT
15 COUNTRIES
ALBANIA, ANDORRA, ARMENIA, BAHRAIN, BHUTAN, HUNGARY, KIRIBATI, LATVIA, LITHUANIA, POLAND, SENEGAL, SLOVAKIA, SPAIN, SRI LANKA, AND SWITZERLAND

MAPPING POLICIES AGAINST THE SDGS
10 COUNTRIES
BENIN, GREECE, GUINEA, IRELAND, JAMAICA, MALI, NIGER, SAUDI ARABIA, TOGO, AND THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

against the SDGs (and their targets), assessment of data availability and/or establishment of baselines, or a combination of both. The most common type of assessment noted in VNR reports was an assessment of data and policies (15). In 2017, the majority of assessments (16 of 32 countries) focussed on data availability and/or the establishment of baselines.[33] Ten (10) countries assessed policies only, while six assessed data availability and baselines. One country – Lao People's Democratic Republic – plans to assess baselines.

BEST PRACTICE SPOTLIGHT
Assess policies, data availability and baselines to inform prioritisation and nationalisation of the 2030 Agenda, and ensure an evidence-based approach to implementation.

A case study in good practice: Making use of the United Nations Development Programme's Rapid Integrated Assessment tool to support 2030 Agenda implementation
VNR reports for Albania, Bhutan, Guinea, Jamaica, Mali, Niger, Saudi Arabia, and Sri Lanka noted the use of the United Nations Development Programme's Rapid Integrated Assessment Tool to assess alignment of existing national policies to the SDGs. The tool supports countries to mainstream the SDGs into national and sub-national planning through an assessment of readiness for SDG implementation. It includes a set of steps and templates that enable countries to assess the relevance of the SDGs and interlinkages across targets.

3.1.3 Results of assessments

The results of country gap and baseline assessments provide insights on countries' starting points with respect to implementation. For countries that assessed policies, the VNR reports tend to provide information regarding the extent to which the SDGs and their targets are aligned or integrated into national policies, with some countries providing details on the percentage of targets aligned. The results of data assessments tend to be presented in terms of overall data availability. This includes with respect to indicator availability according to the level of methodological development and available data. Information on gaps in terms of progress for 2030 Agenda implementation is also presented in the goal-by-goal analysis for some countries (however this information is not explicitly linked to the assessment carried out or showcased as results of the assessment). In the case of Bahrain, the report identifies the key priorities for 2030 Agenda implementation that are a result of the country's assessment.

✓ **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Conduct an assessment that identifies gaps in existing policies and programmes, examines data availability, and sets out baselines from which to measure progress and assess where additional efforts are needed.

- Clearly articulate how the assessment was conducted and provide a summary of the gaps identified for each goal.

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33   Kindornay, 2017. For countries examined in 2017, eight mapped or planned to map their policies while another eight had examined or planned to examine both data and policies.

3.2 Incorporation of the 2030 Agenda into national frameworks and policies

Incorporating the 2030 Agenda, including the SDGs and its transformative principles, into policies, plans and programmes is a building block for implementation. National frameworks and policies set the overall direction for implementation and provide guidance to government institutions and other stakeholders.

3.2.1 Incorporating the 2030 Agenda into policy frameworks

Updating existing policies and frameworks and/or establishing new ones that set out national priorities, targets and indicators for 2030 Agenda implementation shows that governments are serious about recognising and addressing national level sustainable development challenges.

> **A case study in good practice: The 2030 Agenda as the basis for decision-making in Andorra**
> In 2016, the Andorra Council of Ministers decided that all actions submitted to the Council for approval should be associated with one or more SDGs to ensure that the Agenda 2030 becomes the basis for decisions by the Andorran executive.
>
> Source: Summary provided by IISD based on Andorra's VNR report.

In terms of the degree to which states have incorporated the 2030 Agenda into policy frameworks, the results in 2018 are similar to 2017. Half of the countries (23 of 46) reporting in 2018 have incorporated the SDGs into national development plans and related policies and frameworks directly. In 2017, 23 of 45 countries had noted a similar approach. While eight countries had developed a specific SDG implementation strategy according to 2017 VNR reports, only three countries took this approach in 2018. Seven (7) countries reported that they incorporated the SDGs directly into national development plans and developed an SDG implementation strategy, versus nine countries in 2017. Eleven (11) countries reporting in 2018 have not incorporated the SDGs into national plans or through a specific strategy (this figure was three in 2017). VNR reports for seven of the 11 countries including Canada, Lithuania, Mali, Malta, Romania, Senegal, and Sudan indicate that the SDGs will be further integrated into national policies going forward. The VNR reports for Australia and Singapore did not provide information on whether and how the 2030 Agenda has been incorporated into national policies and programmes.

> **BEST PRACTICE SPOTLIGHT**
> **Integrate Agenda 2030 priorities into national policies and frameworks and develop a roadmap to accelerate implementation.**

> **A case study in good practice: Keeping 2030 Agenda implementation ambitious in Ireland**
> Ireland prepared a 2030 Vision as part of its SDG National Implementation Plan 2018-20. Recognising that meaningful implementation of the SDGs requires countries to translate global ambitions to the national context, Ireland's 2030 Vision includes a set of ambitious high-level commitments that take into account all dimensions of sustainable development and address the 17 goals. The government plans to review the 2030 Vision on a rolling basis to ensure it remains ambitious as it develops new SDG implementation plans.
>
> Source: Excerpt adapted from Ireland's VNR report.

3.2.2 Integrating the 2030 Agenda Principles

The 2030 Agenda is informed by a number of key principles, including universality, human rights, integration, partnership, inclusivity, pursuing development within planetary boundaries, inter-generational responsibility and leaving no one behind. These principles represent the spirit of the 2030 Agenda and serve as transformative elements of implementation. Building on the 2017 assessment framework, the 2018 framework now also tracks references in VNR reports to inter-generational responsibility and planetary boundaries, as well as examining references to human rights based approaches, leaving no one behind, and universality. This assessment aims to provide an indication of the extent to which the 2030 Agenda principles are informing implementation. [34]

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34   Other principles are captured in the sections that follow through the examination of integration, stakeholder engagement and partnership.

Progressing national SDGs implementation

BEST PRACTICE SPOTLIGHT
Explicitly link the implementation of each SDG to relevant national and international human rights frameworks.

Establish policies and institutions to ensure a human rights-based approach to sustainable development in 2030 Agenda implementation.

As shown in Figure 7, the majority of countries (41) refer to the principle of leaving no one behind in their reports (39 countries referred to the principle in 2017). Inter-generational responsibility was the next most cited principle (17), though it should be noted that reports refer to this principle in different ways, such as the rights of future generations or responsibility towards future generations. Universality is the next most commonly referenced principle, referred to in 16 VNR reports. In 2017, 17 countries — 16 of which are high-income and upper-middle-income countries — referred to the universal nature of the 2030 Agenda. In 2018, countries that referenced this principle included a range of high-, middle- and low-income countries.

Only six countries referred to human rights-based approaches as an important principle of the 2030 Agenda,[35] versus ten countries in 2017. Countries that refer to a human rights-based approach do not define it. An additional nine reports refer to human rights as central to the 2030 Agenda and provide evidence throughout the VNR report on the prioritisation of human rights and/or their links to specific SDGs. Another nine reports also make reference to human rights occasionally, generally in relation to specific SDGs, although they do not include an overarching reference to human rights in relation to the 2030 Agenda. A number of countries included reference to international and national human rights legislation throughout their report, highlighting the establishment of institutions and policy processes that aim to guarantee human rights. Australia (see case study below) and Hungary[36] are notable examples, both of which have established institutions that ensure the promotion and respect for human rights, including in relation to implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

FIGURE 7. REFERENCE TO 2030 AGENDA PRINCIPLES
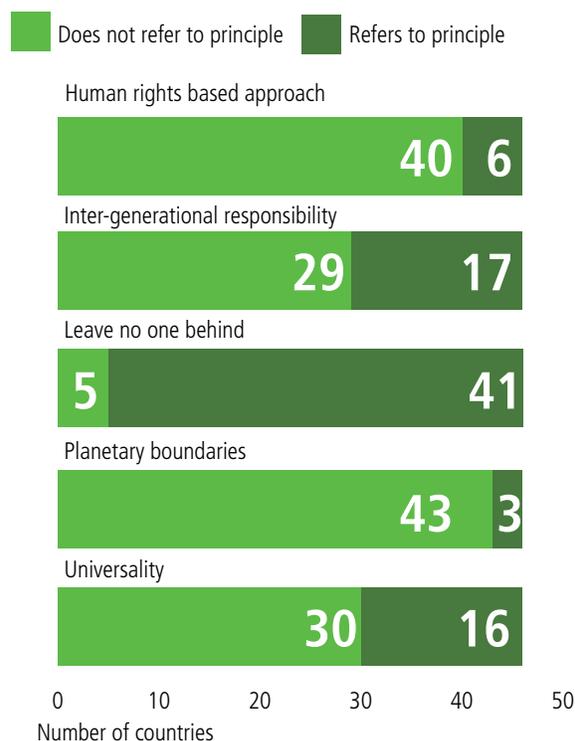
Finally, only three countries — Bahrain, Hungary and Switzerland — refer to planetary boundaries. Of the nine planetary boundaries identified by the Stockholm Resilience Center,[37] countries that do not refer directly to planetary boundaries tend to refer to climate change, biodiversity, land system change, and chemical pollution. Some reports also referred to the ozone and ocean acidification, but with less frequency. Specific references to nitrogen and phosphorus flows to the biosphere and oceans and atmospheric aerosol loading were limited. Even in the instances where reports refer to some of the planetary boundaries, they are not understood as such, but rather presented as part of country progress and commitments related to environmental goals.

As was the case in 2017, VNR reporting for 2018 shows that countries tend to focus on the SDGs rather than the broader 2030 Agenda and its transformative principles overall.

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35 Two countries made reference to the human rights-based approach but in terms of the role of civil society and in relation to international development cooperation (rather than as central to the 2030 Agenda). These countries were not included in the six noted above.

36 Hungary's Office of the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights has a number of responsibilities in 2030 Agenda implementation. These include efforts to: "monitor the progress in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, linking it with already existing human rights monitoring systems; participate in the development of national indicators, including providing advice and expertise on a human-rights based approach to data; support transparent and inclusive public participation and consultation processes; and collaborate in capacity building and sharing of experience in order to contribute to a human-rights-based approach to the implementation of the sustainable development framework" (p. 66).

37 These include stratospheric ozone depletion, loss of biosphere integrity (biodiversity loss and extinctions), chemical pollution and release of novel entities, climate change, ocean acidification, freshwater consumption and the global hydrological cycle, land system change, nitrogen and phosphorus flows to the biosphere and oceans, and atmospheric aerosol loading.

Progressing national SDGs implementation

🇦🇺 **A case study in good practice: Australia's human rights-based approach to sustainable development**

Australia's VNR report showcases a human rights-based approach to sustainable development and implementation of the 2030 Agenda that emphasizes respect, protection and promotion of human rights in accordance with international human rights law. For Australia, "if global development is not based on human rights, it will not be sustainable" (p. 10). Australia is a party to the core United Nations human rights treaties, and has established legislations, policies, institutions and programs to promote and protect rights at federal, state and territory levels. Policy and legislative development processes integrate an assessment of human rights. According to the VNR report, all bills and disallowable legislative instruments introduced to the federal parliament must be assessed in terms of compatibility with the rights and freedoms outlined in the seven core United Nations human rights treaties. Human rights frameworks are also integrated into policies accordingly. For example, Australia's National Disability Strategy 2010-20 works to ensure the principles underpinning the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities are incorporated into policies and programmes. The Strategy aims to ensure that people with disabilities can participate in all aspects of Australian life through a more inclusive approach to the design of policies, programs and infrastructure.

Australia has a Human Rights Commission that was established in 1986 to promote awareness of human rights, inquire into and attempt to conciliate complaints of discrimination, and conduct educational activities on human rights in Australia. The Commission has examined its work in light of the 2030 Agenda. The Commission has seven commissioners, responsible for social justice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, Age Discrimination, Children, Disability Discrimination, Human Rights, Race and Sex Discrimination.

Australia is also taking a strong stance on human rights at global and regional levels. Australia sees its membership (2018-20) to the Human Rights Council as "built around the pillars of gender equality, good governance, and freedom of expression, the rights of indigenous peoples and strong national human rights institutions and capacity building" (p. 10). The government's priorities include: the abolition of the death penalty; promotion of equal human rights for LGBTI persons; protection of the freedom of religion or belief; and enabling civil society to protect and promote human rights through participation in the United Nations human rights system. At the regional level, the Australian Human Rights Council provides human rights technical assistance to build capacity in the Asia-Pacific region.

Source: Excerpt adapted from Australia's VNR report.

✅ **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Fully integrate the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs into national plans and strategies based on an evaluation of existing policies, approaches and progress to identify gaps, adapt policies and target areas where further progress is needed. The fact that existing policies already align to the SDGs is not sufficient.

- Operationalise the principles of the 2030 Agenda in approaches to implementation recognising the universal, rights-based and interlinked nature of the agenda. VNR reports should demonstrate how approaches to sustainable development are transforming, based on the principles of the 2030 Agenda and not just the SDGs.

- Ensure policies and programmes are informed by and integrate efforts to leave no one behind, including by prioritising those most in need to consistently reach marginalised communities.

- Ground plans and strategies in human rights, including by linking activities to international and national human rights commitments and establishing appropriate institutions and mechanisms to support a human rights-based approach to sustainable development.

- Address domestic and global dimensions of sustainable development, and the relationships between them, in an effort to realise the 2030 Agenda, respecting the principle of universality.

- Undertake actions with reference to and respect for planetary boundaries and responsibilities towards future generations.

⊙ 3.3 Nationalising the 2030 Agenda

While successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda requires that governments work towards realising all SDGs, governments are expected to implement the 2030 Agenda in line with their national context and priorities. This means identifying national (and local) priorities, targets and indicators through inclusive and participatory processes.

3.3.1 Nationalisation: Identifying priorities

The identification of national priorities for 2030 Agenda implementation is an important way for countries to situate implementation in light of baselines and existing progress, generate ownership and adapt the goals to country-specific contexts. In the context of prioritisation, the integrated nature of the 2030 Agenda means that countries can be a leader on some goals, but a laggard on none.

Three years after the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, the majority of 2018 VNRs – 35 of 46 – show that national priorities have been selected (34 of 45 countries reviewed in 2017 had selected national priorities). The United Arab Emirates VNR report provides information on both national and sub-national SDG priorities. The VNR report for Spain showcases sub-national priorities as well. For the 11 countries that have not selected national priorities, five are in the process of selecting national priorities or plan to do so going forward.

🇷🇴 A case study in good practice: Prioritising culture for development in Romania

Romania's VNR report outlines the important role of culture in the 2030 Agenda. Culture is a cross-cutting dimension in the areas of education, food security, the environment, economic growth, sustainable consumption and production patterns, and peaceful and inclusive societies. It is also mentioned directly in the context of SDG 11 on sustainable cities and communities through target 11.4 – Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage.

Romania is carrying out a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization project, "Culture for Development Indicators," which contributes to implementation of the 2005

Convention for the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. The project includes design and analysis of 22 indicators that reflect the contributions of culture to development. The indicators assess the contribution of culture to sustainable development in a number of policy areas including the economy, education, governance, social participation, gender equality, communication and heritage. The 22 indicators correlate with nine SDGs and 36 targets.

Through its nationalisation of the 2030 Agenda, Romania has made culture an important component of implementation plans.

Source: Except adapted from Romania's VNR.

As was the case in 2017, the approach to articulating national priorities varies greatly across 2018 VNR reports. Some countries listed national priorities with reference to specific SDGs. Others noted priority areas, such as economic growth or social inclusion that apply to more than one goal. Others still point to particular targets within goals that are behind and therefore a priority.

BEST PRACTICE SPOTLIGHT
Include all dimensions of sustainable development in the selection of national priorities.

For the 34 countries[38] that provided information on their priorities for 2030 Agenda implementation, the most commonly cited priorities include those related to social outcomes (32) and the economy (30) (Figure 8). Priorities related to the environment were noted for 26 countries. The VNR reports for 2018 show less of an emphasis on the environment compared to 2017. The priorities of the 36 countries that provided this information in 2017 reflected all three dimensions of sustainable development more evenly.[39]

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38   VNR reports for Lebanon and Sudan do not list national priorities, however civil society reports provided this imformation. These countries are not included in Figure 8 as the information was not presented through VNR reports. Planned priorities for Malta are included in Figure 8.

39   In 2017, social outcomes and the environment were noted by 32 countries while economic dimensions were listed as a priority for 30 countries.

Progressing national SDGs implementation   28

Governance continues to be a priority area. In 2017, 21 of 36 countries noted governance as a priority while 21 of 34 countries noted issues related to governance as a priority in 2018. Thirteen (13) countries prioritised inequality in 2018 versus nine in 2017. Fourteen (14) countries reporting in 2018 noted issues related to the means of implementation (or SDG 17) in their priorities. Ten (10) countries had similar priorities in 2017. While the 2017 VNR reports did not show culture as a priority area overall, in 2018, six countries – Ecuador, Hungary, Latvia, Saudi Arabia, the State of Palestine, and the United Arab Emirates[40] – noted culture or issues related to national identify as among their priorities for 2030 Agenda implementation.

FIGURE 8. NATIONAL 2030 AGENDA PRIORITIES

0   5   10   15   20   25   30   35
Number of countries
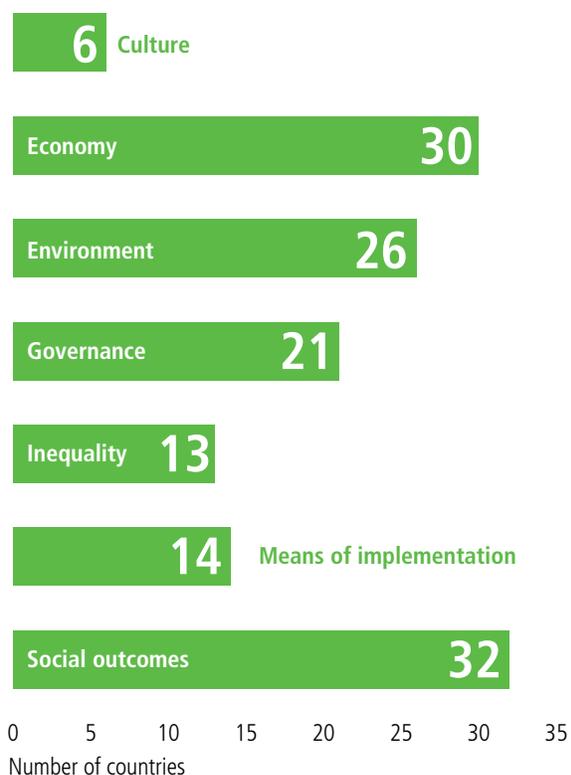
3.3.2 Nationalisation: Developing national targets and indicators

In line with the establishment of national priorities, governments have been encouraged to establish national targets and indicators as needed. This is an important way for countries to link existing national targets and indicators to 2030 Agenda implementation and develop new ones where gaps exist. National targets can be used to set an ambitious agenda for national level implementation

in light of realities at the country level. National indicators help to assess progress on sustainable development overall, harnessing existing available data that suits country level monitoring and evaluation needs. National level targets and indicators should ideally complement those at the global level.

Seven (7) countries reporting in 2018 (versus 13 reporting in 2017) have completed the process of developing national targets and indicators to inform domestic level implementation of the SDGs. Benin, Niger, and Guinea have prioritised the existing global targets and their related indicators. The Bahamas, Colombia, Switzerland and the United Arab Emirates have set their own targets and indicators.

> 🇪🇸 **A case study in good practice: Selecting sub-national indicators for 2030 Agenda implementation in Spain**
>
> A number of sub-national level governments in Spain have or plan to established sustainable development plans and indicator frameworks to monitor progress on the 2030 Agenda. The government of the Autonomous Community of Andalusia has developed two strategic plans to guide 2030 Agenda implementation. Progress will be monitored through an initial set of 43 indicators. The Basque Government has established its First Basque Country 2030 Agenda (2016-20), that includes a selection of 100 SDG targets to government commitments and 50 indicators. The Catalan Government has committed to draft a National Plan for the SDGs, supported by a system of targets and indicators for the region. A sustainability strategy was developed for Galicia and includes a series of indicators adapted to Galicia. The Navarre Government is establishing a system of indicators based on those proposed by the European Union, as well as its own, to monitor progress on the 2030 Agenda.
>
> Source: Except adapted from Spain's VNR.

BEST PRACTICE SPOTLIGHT
Establish sub-national targets and indicators as part of localisation efforts.

Bahrain, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Mali, Namibia, Paraguay, the State of Palestine, Togo, and Viet Nam have developed national targets only. Nine countries – Egypt, Hungary, Kiribati, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Qatar and Spain – developed national indicators only, largely making use of existing data that reflects country context and priorities.

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40   Notwithstanding the best practice spotlight above that shows Romania has prioritised culture in 2030 Agenda implementation, the country does not actually list its national priorities in its VNR report, and as such, is not included here.

Progressing national SDGs implementation

Fifteen (15) countries have not prepared national targets or indicators. Of these, six – Armenia, Canada, Mexico, Saudi Arabia, Slovakia, Sri Lanka and Sudan – are planning to develop national indicators. Saudi Arabia's report also refers to targets. VNR reports for Albania, Bhutan, Latvia and Senegal seem to indicate that the countries are making use of existing targets and indicators that align with the SDGs. Andorra, Armenia, Australia, Lebanon and Singapore appear to be making use of the global target and indicator frameworks. Greece has not developed its own targets and indicators, but rather is using the European Union's SDG indicator framework. For three countries – Cabo Verde, Jamaica and Uruguay – the status of national target and indicator development is unclear. Ireland's VNR does not provide information on the creation of national targets and indicators.

✅ RECOMMENDATIONS

- Identify national sustainable development priorities. This means addressing all dimensions of sustainable development, recognising the interlinkages between society, the economy, and the environment.

- Develop national and sub-national targets and indicators through an inclusive and participatory process to complement global targets and indicators.

⚙ 3.4 Integration and policy coherence

The 2030 Agenda is significant in its scope and scale. It covers economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development, alongside issues related to governance, culture, inequality and partnership. It has implications for domestic and foreign policies as well as efforts at the local level. Governments and other stakeholders face the challenge of ensuring an integrated and coherent approach to 2030 Agenda implementation. This approach must promotes synergies to realise progress on all dimensions of sustainable development at local, national and global levels while addressing trade-offs.

Photo: © Antonio Busiello/WWF-US

3.4.1 SDG COVERAGE

The review includes an examination of SDG coverage in the VNR reports and the nature of reporting on them. This facilitates an assessment of how countries are adopting integrated approaches to implementation. In this vein, reporting on all 17 SDGs improved significantly in 2018 over 2017 (Table 2). In 2017, 11 of the 45 countries examined reported on all SDGs whereas this figure was 28 countries for 2018. Three (3) countries, versus eight in 2017, reported only on the HLPF theme goals. Eight (8) countries reported on a limited set of country selected SDGs. In 2017, 19 of 45 countries took this approach. Seven (7) countries, the same as in 2017, did not prepare a goal-by-goal analysis, but rather presented progress through a thematic discussion with references to individual goals.

BEST PRACTICE SPOTLIGHT
Provide a detailed assessment of all 17 goals, with appropriate linkages to all dimensions of sustainable development and reference to domestic and global efforts to realise the 2030 Agenda.

Progressing national SDGs implementation   **31**

TABLE 2. GOAL BY GOAL REPORTING IN THE 2018 VNR REPORTS

SDG COVERAGE	COUNTRIES		
All SDGs examined (28 countries)	AUSTRALIA BAHAMAS BHUTAN CABO VERDE CANADA DOMINICAN REPUBLIC ECUADOR EGYPT GUINEA	HUNGARY IRELAND JAMAICA LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC LATVIA LEBANON LITHUANIA MALTA MEXICO	POLAND SAUDI ARABIA SENEGAL SINGAPORE SPAIN SRI LANKA STATE OF PALESTINE SWITZERLAND UNITED ARAB EMIRATES VIET NAM
SDGs covered by the HLPF theme (3 countries)	QATAR	ROMANIA	TOGO
Limited set of country-selected SDGs (8 countries)	ANDORRA ARMENIA COLOMBIA	BENIN MALI NAMIBIA	NIGER URUGUAY
SDGs not examined though a goal-by-goal analysis (7 countries)[41]	ALBANIA BAHRAIN GREECE	KIRIBATI PARAGUAY	SLOVAKIA SUDAN

41

41 Kiribati and Sudan only submitted main messages.

FIGURE 9. COVERAGE OF SPECIFIC SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

ALL SDGS · · · · · · · · · · · LIMITED SET OF SDGS · · · · · · · · · · · HLPF THEME SDGS

1. No poverty
2. Zero hunger
3. Good health and well-being
4. Quality education
5. Gender equality
6. Clean water and sanitation
7. Affordable and clean energy
8. Decent work and economic growth
9. Industry, innovation and infrastructure
10. Reduced inequalities
11. Sustainable cities and communities
12. Responsible consumption
13. Climate action
14. Life below water
15. Life on land
16. Peace, justice and strong institutions
17. Partnerships for the goals

0   5   10   15   20   25   30   35   40

Number of countries

Figure 9 provides an overview of the goals most commonly featured in VNR reports according to the approach taken to the goal-by-goal analysis.

Most countries – 30 of 46 – provided a detailed account of their progress on sustainable development, including those that did not analyse specific SDGs, but rather presented a thematic analysis. This finding is similar to reporting in 2017; 29 countries provided a detailed analysis in their VNR reports. Twelve (12) countries (versus 15 in 2017) provided a summary of progress in their examination of goals. Four (4) countries, two of which did not submit actual VNR reports but only main messages, provided no details. These include Bahrain, Kiribati, Paraguay and Sudan.

One issue that emerged from the extensive examination of the 2017 VNR reports was that countries tend to provide a significant amount of detail on efforts relating to goals, but do not provide information on best practice, lessons learned, gaps and priorities going forward. Though reports were detailed, the information provided is not necessarily conducive to promoting peer learning and garnering support to address challenges in implementation. This challenge remains in 2018 VNR reporting (although reporting on best practice has improved, as noted below). In addition, it is not clear from the reports that countries have created new programmes and initiatives in light of the 2030 Agenda. Many countries detailed pre-existing policies and programmes that happen to be aligned with and supportive of progress on the SDGs similar to in 2017.

BEST PRACTICE SPOTLIGHT
Summarise best practice, lessons learned, gaps and priorities, and areas where support is needed in the goal by goal analysis to facilitate learning and global partnership.

3.4.2 Integration

The review looks at coverage of the three dimensions of sustainable development and the extent to which countries refer to linkages between the goals and relevant dimensions of sustainable development. This assessment is meant to provide some indication of how countries are dealing with the challenge of integration in the 2030 Agenda. Figure 10 provides an overview of the extent to which countries examined all three dimensions of sustainable development.

Most countries (29) gave equal attention to all three dimensions of sustainable development – social, economic and environmental - in their VNR report overall. In 2017, 33 countries took this same approach. Twelve (12) countries focussed on all dimensions but gave greater emphasis to economic (eight), social (one) or environmental (three) dimensions. Four (4) countries gave limited attention to environmental dimensions while one country, Sudan, addressed only social and economic dimensions in the main messages it submitted.

FIGURE 10. ATTENTION TO SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL DIMENSIONS OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN VNR REPORTS

ALL DIMENSIONS BUT GREATER FOCUS ON ECONOMIC
8 COUNTRIES

ONLY SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DIMENSIONS ADDRESSED
1 COUNTRY

ALL DIMENSIONS BUT LIMITED FOCUS ON ENVIRONMENTAL
4 COUNTRIES

ALL DIMENSIONS OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
29 COUNTRIES

ALL DIMENSIONS BUT A GREATER FOCUS ON SOCIAL
1 COUNTRY

ALL DIMENSIONS BUT GREATER FOCUS ON ENVIRONMENTAL
3 COUNTRIES
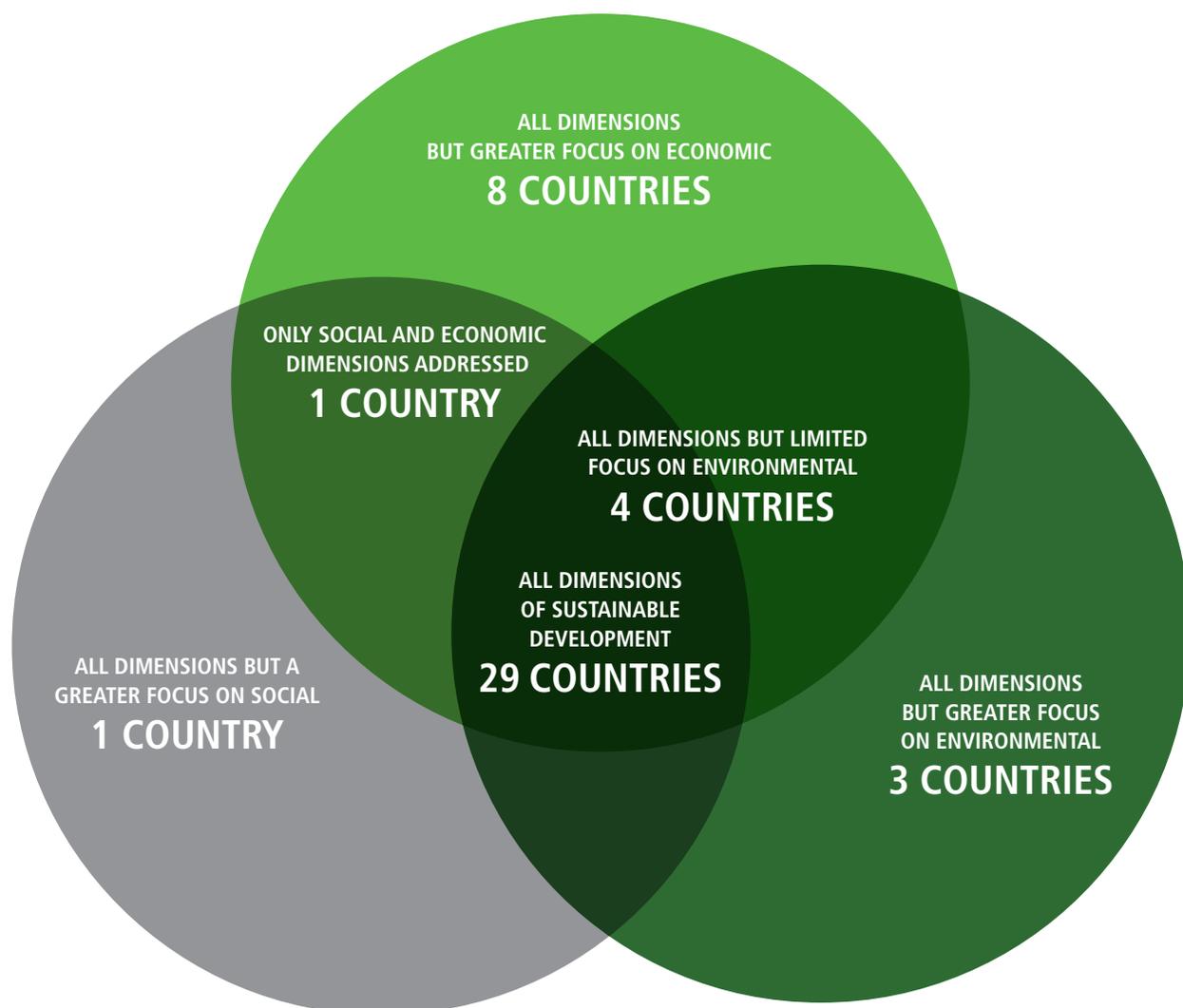
🇪🇬 **A case study in good practice: Ensuring integration in 2030 Agenda implementation in Egypt**

Egypt is in the process of updating its Sustainable Development Strategy. Two years following the adoption of the strategy, the Ministry of Planning, Monitoring and Administrative Reform launched a review to ensure the strategy accounts for a number of major changes in the country, including the introduction of the structural adjustment program in 2016, and new information resulting from the 2017 national census, which showed increased rates of population growth. There is also a need for the strategy to reflect priorities in achieving food, water, and energy security. The review process is being carried out based on a number of principles including "reinforcing the multidimensional aspect of sustainable development and its interconnected nature; highlighting the benefits of sustainable development, i.e. adoption of a "green economy" as a tool to achieve sustainable development; [and] stakeholder engagement to create ownership," (p. 9) including with parliamentarians, trade unions, women, youth, civil society, and the private sector.

According to the report, public investments prioritise projects that achieve all dimensions of sustainable development. The government is making use of an integrated electronic system for planning and monitoring to ensure projects' compliance with criteria of sustainability. All projects submitted by public entities are linked to the goals and key performance indicators of the Sustainable Development Strategy, enhancing monitoring and evaluation processes.

Source: Excerpt adapted from Egypt's VNR report.

In the goal-by-goal analysis, 17 (of 46) countries made references to applicable social, economic and environmental linkages between goal areas. However, more than half of the countries reporting in 2018, or 25 countries, made limited reference to linkages between dimensions, tending to take a silo approach in their goal-by-goal analysis. These findings represent a backsliding in comparison to 2017. In 2017, 22 of 45 countries made appropriate references to linkages while only 19 provide limited references. Two (2) countries – Egypt and Sudan, made no linkages between dimensions of sustainable development in their analysis (in 2017, Brazil and Qatar were the only countries that followed a similar approach). As noted in 2017, these results may indicate that countries are not

sufficiently ensuring integration in their approaches to 2030 Agenda implementation.

3.4.3 Policy coherence for sustainable development

The review of VNR reports looked at the extent to which countries made linkages to international agreements related to the 2030 Agenda and policy coherence for sustainable development.

LINKAGES TO INTERNATIONAL FRAMEWORKS THAT SUPPORT THE 2030 AGENDA

The 2030 Agenda is supported by a range of international agreements and frameworks that can be used to further strengthen and progress implementation. Improving on the analysis in 2017 that examined references to climate change and the Paris Agreement, and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the 2018 review also examined references to the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the global aid and development effectiveness agenda.

All countries except Sudan referenced climate change, however 38 explicitly refer to the Paris Agreement.[42] Kiribati and Sudan are the only countries that provided no information on how they tackle climate change. In 2017, this was the case for ten countries, suggesting an improvement in reporting on climate change. Table 3 provides an overview of the main approaches to tackling climate change as outlined in the VNR reports. VNR reports most commonly referred to the development or implementation of national climate policies (35), reducing greenhouse gas emissions (30), sector specific initiatives (30), and improving energy efficiency and/or the use of renewable energy (28). [43]

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[42] All 45 countries examined in 2017 referred to climate change while 27 explicitly referred to the Paris Agreement.

[43] In 2017, 22 countries referred to national policies and plans related to climate change mitigation and adaptation in their VNR reports, while 15 highlight efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, typically providing information on national targets. Another 14 specifically pointed to improving energy efficiency and renewable energy usage.

TABLE 3. EFFORTS TO TACKLE CLIMATE CHANGE

Development and/ or implementation of national climate policies (35 countries)		
ANDORRA	HUNGARY	PARAGUAY
ARMENIA	IRELAND	POLAND
AUSTRALIA	JAMAICA	QATAR
BAHAMAS	LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC	ROMANIA
BAHRAIN	LATVIA	SINGAPORE
BENIN	LEBANON	SRI LANKA
BHUTAN	LITHUANIA	STATE OF PALESTINE
CABO VERDE	MALI	SWITZERLAND
CANADA	MALTA	UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
COLOMBIA	MEXICO	URUGUAY
EGYPT	NIGER	VIET NAM
GREECE		
GUINEA		

Reducing greenhouse gas emissions (30 countries)		
ALBANIA	HUNGARY	ROMANIA
ANDORRA	IRELAND	SAUDI ARABIA
ARMENIA	JAMAICA	SENEGAL
AUSTRALIA	LATVIA	SINGAPORE
BAHRAIN	LITHUANIA	SPAIN
BHUTAN[44]	MALI	SRI LANKA
CANADA	MALTA	SWITZERLAND
COLOMBIA	MEXICO	UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
EGYPT	NAMIBIA	URUGUAY
GREECE	POLAND	VIET NAM

44   Commitment to remain carbon neutral.

Progressing national SDGs implementation

Sector specific initiatives (30 countries)	ALBANIA	IRELAND	ROMANIA
	ANDORRA	JAMAICA	SAUDI ARABIA
	AUSTRALIA	LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC	SINGAPORE
	BHUTAN	LATVIA	SLOVAKIA
	CABO VERDE	LEBANON	SPAIN
	CANADA	LITHUANIA	SRI LANKA
	COLOMBIA	MALI	UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
	DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	MALTA	URUGUAY
	EGYPT	NIGER	VIET NAM
	GREECE	POLAND	
	HUNGARY		

Improving energy efficiency and/or renewable energy usage (28 countries)	ANDORRA	IRELAND	ROMANIA
	AUSTRALIA	JAMAICA	SAUDI ARABIA
	BAHAMAS	LATVIA	SINGAPORE
	CANADA	LEBANON	SLOVAKIA
	DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	LITHUANIA	SPAIN
	ECUADOR	MALTA	STATE OF PALESTINE
	EGYPT	MEXICO	SWITZERLAND
	GREECE	PARAGUAY	UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
	HUNGARY	POLAND	VIET NAM
		QATAR	

Reducing climate and disaster vulnerabilities (25 countries)

- ARMENIA
- AUSTRALIA
- BAHAMAS
- BENIN
- BHUTAN
- CANADA
- DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
- ECUADOR
- GREECE
- GUINEA
- JAMAICA
- MEXICO
- NAMIBIA
- NIGER
- PARAGUAY
- QATAR
- SAUDI ARABIA
- SENEGAL
- SINGAPORE
- SLOVAKIA
- SRI LANKA
- STATE OF PALESTINE
- SWITZERLAND
- URUGUAY
- VIET NAM

Reforestation and/or conservation efforts (15 countries)

- ALBANIA
- CABO VERDE
- DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
- ECUADOR
- GREECE
- GUINEA
- JAMAICA
- LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC
- MALTA
- POLAND
- ROMANIA
- SINGAPORE
- SRI LANKA
- URUGUAY
- VIET NAM

Adaptation (15 countries)

- ARMENIA
- BAHAMAS
- BENIN
- BHUTAN
- ECUADOR
- GREECE
- GUINEA
- JAMAICA
- MALI
- NIGER
- SENEGAL
- SRI LANKA
- UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
- URUGUAY
- VIET NAM

Establishment / use of institutional mechanisms (15 countries)

- ALBANIA
- ANDORRA
- AUSTRALIA
- EGYPT
- GUINEA
- HUNGARY
- JAMAICA
- MALTA
- QATAR
- SENEGAL
- SINGAPORE
- SRI LANKA
- STATE OF PALESTINE
- UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
- VIET NAM

Progressing national SDGs implementation

Contribution to international climate finance / international partnerships to address climate change (11 countries)	ANDORRA	LATVIA	SPAIN
	AUSTRALIA	LITHUANIA	SWITZERLAND
	CANADA	MALTA	UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
	HUNGARY	SINGAPORE	

Support for climate related research (10 countries)	AUSTRALIA	IRELAND	SPAIN
	CABO VERDE	JAMAICA	UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
	CANADA	SINGAPORE	VIET NAM
		SLOVAKIA	

Education initiatives (8 countries)	ANDORRA	QATAR	SPAIN
	AUSTRALIA	SINGAPORE	UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
	CABO VERDE	SLOVAKIA	

Efforts by sub-national governments or at municipal level (7 countries)	AUSTRALIA	LITHUANIA	NIGER
	ECUADOR	MALI	SENEGAL
	HUNGARY		

Strengthened capacities (7 countries)	CABO VERDE	MALI	SENEGAL
	LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC	NIGER	UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
		QATAR	

More countries (21) linked the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda than in 2017 (15 countries). Over half (26) of the countries reporting in 2018 referred to the Convention on Biological Diversity while 19 referred to the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. Only nine countries referred to the international aid and development effectiveness agendas as outlined in the Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation. This included three high-income countries, (Ireland, Latvia and Romania), two lower-middle-income countries (the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Namibia) and four low-income countries (Guinea, Mali, Niger and Senegal).

BEST PRACTICE SPOTLIGHT
Link the realisation of each SDG to relevant existing national and international commitments and frameworks to ensure coherency in 2030 Agenda implementation and create synergies with existing commitments, policies and actions.

Two reports stood out for 2018 in terms of linking the realisation of specific SDGs to existing commitments. Though they did not refer to the global aid and development effectiveness agendas, the VNR reports for Australia and Greece consistently referred to other relevant international agreements and frameworks throughout.

> 🔵 **A case study in good practice: Efforts to improve the effectiveness of development cooperation in the Lao People's Democratic Republic**
>
> Issues related to aid and development effectiveness are underreported across VNR reports. The VNR report for the Lao People's Democratic Republic, however, highlights important efforts to improve the quality and effectiveness of development cooperation. The Vientiane Declaration on Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (2016-25) serves as the country's overarching framework for development cooperation. The Declaration aligns with the global agenda for effective development cooperation, including the 2012 Busan Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation, the 2014 Mexico High Level Meeting Communiqué, the 2015 Addis Ababa Action Agenda, and the SDGs. Working with development partners, the government is in the process of developing a monitoring framework in line with the Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation. The framework will guide monitoring and reporting efforts on the effectiveness of development cooperation at the country level. In addition to these efforts, the government has also renewed its commitment to enhance the national development cooperation forum, its Round Table Process and Sector Working Groups to enhance multi-stakeholder partnerships.
>
> Source: Except adapted from the Lao People's Democratic Republic VNR report.

POLICY COHERENCE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Domestic policies have an impact on the realisation of sustainable development at home and abroad. In this context, policy coherence for sustainable development is an important part of ensuring that domestic policies maximise their positive contributions and minimise negative contributions to sustainable development globally. The number of countries referring to policy coherence for sustainable development has remained fairly consistent over 2017 and 2018, with 15 countries for each year. Four (4) other countries reporting in 2018 referred to policy coherence more generally.

Figure 11 provides an overview of the extent to which countries assessed the impacts of their domestic and foreign policies on the realisation of the 2030 Agenda globally. Countries were included if they made at least one reference to their domestic and/or foreign policies contributing to the SDGs globally. Twenty (20) countries included no examination of the impact of domestic or foreign policies. Fifteen (15) countries examined foreign policies only. Ten (10) high-income and upper-middle-income countries examined domestic and foreign policy contributions. Bhutan was the only country that noted the contribution of a domestic policy only to the

SDGs globally, in the area of the country's environmental efforts. By way of comparison, in 2017, 11 countries assessed domestic and foreign policies, 17 assessed foreign policies, 17 provided no assessment and no countries examined only domestic policies.

FIGURE 11. ASSESSING IMPACTS ON THE SDGS GLOBALLY
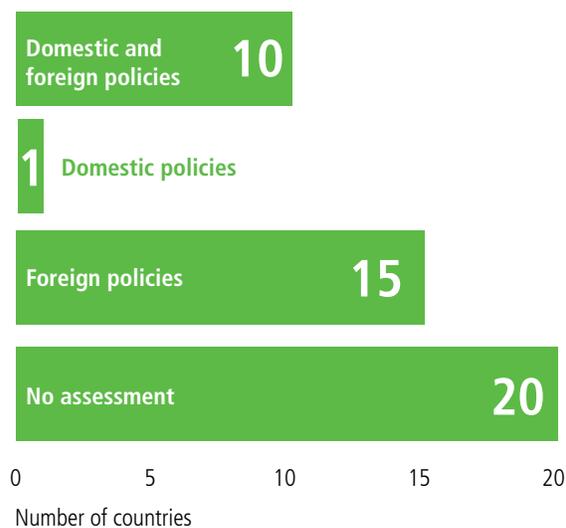
For countries that noted contributions in terms of domestic and foreign policies, domestic policy areas covered included efforts by host countries with respect to Syrian refugees, agricultural policies, water management policies, energy policies and efforts in health and education. No VNR report provided a systematic assessment of the impact of domestic policies. Countries that examined their foreign policies tended to refer to contributions in terms of international public finance, trade, and addressing global systemic problems such as illicit flows.

> 🟡 **A case study in good practice: Using technology to ensure policy coherence on sustainable development in Benin**
>
> In Benin, to ensure better control over the coordination of the 2030 Agenda as well as effective governance of the goals, an application was developed to measure the relative "sensitivity of Ministries' annual interventions" to the SDGs. The application, called MeSODD, makes it possible to assess the level of alignment of each Ministry with the achievement of the SDGs. It also measures the sensitivity or adequacy of each Ministry's activities regarding SDG priority targets. The application helps to focus attention on actions that could lead to inter-sectoral synergies for achieving the SDGs, and outline comprehensive, collaborative and specific measures that should be followed by Ministries to make progress on the SDGs.
>
> Source: Except adapted from Benin's VNR.

Progressing national SDGs implementation

For the 21 countries that provided information on policy coherence for sustainable development (or in some cases, coherence more generally), nine refer to institutional coherence or coordination. Six (6) refer to policy coherence across sectors while five refer to ensuring coherence between different levels of government. Some countries (six) noted the use of an overarching policy or strategic framework to ensure policy coherence. Four (4) countries referred to examining the impacts of their foreign policies as part of ensuring policy coherence for sustainable development while two countries referred also to domestic policies.

🇪🇸 A case study in good practice: Spain's approach to policy coherence for sustainable development

Spain's VNR report recognizes that policy coherence for sustainable development is about the impacts of foreign and domestic policies. It also notes that policy coherence for sustainable development requires a review of political and institutional mechanisms, recognising the need for coherent national policies that take into account the roles of different levels of government and other stakeholders that contribute to the 2030 Agenda. For Spain, "alignment of public policies with the SDGs—that is, [policy coherence for sustainable development]—takes place in three areas: in domestic actions, to advance the SDGs in Spain; through the international cooperation that Spain undertakes to support third countries in their own efforts; and by ensuring that domestic efforts do not have negative external impacts on other countries or on achievement of global public goods" (p. 87).

The VNR report includes a number of initiatives to ensure policy coherence for sustainable development. The country will prepare an SDG impact analysis for legislative initiatives that includes external and global impacts, improve assessment of the impacts of foreign policy on the SDGs in partnership frameworks with other countries, and incorporate analysis of policy coherence as part of the parliamentary accountability mechanism and through an annual progress report on the 2030 Agenda.

Source: Except adapted from Spain's VNR.

Similar to 2017, only a limited number of countries provided information on their foreign policy contributions in the goal-by-goal analysis. Andorra, Australia, Canada, Ireland, Slovakia, and Switzerland refer to their domestic efforts to realise the SDGs as well as relevant foreign policies in their goal-by-goal analysis. This approach shows how each country supports implementation of the SDGs both at home and abroad. Reporting on goal-by-goal contributions also has potential to prompt greater policy coherence for sustainable development across countries by bringing into focus the impacts of domestic and foreign policies on sustainable development at home and abroad. Such an approach could be replicated by all stakeholders.

✅ RECOMMENDATIONS

- Assess all 17 goals in their VNR reports, respecting the indivisible nature of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.

- Demonstrate how existing policies, programmes and practices are changing to address gaps and support progress on the 2030 Agenda, in addition to existing approaches that are supportive of the SDGs.

- Ensure all dimensions of sustainable development are addressed in SDG implementation and VNR reporting. Linkages and synergies between the different dimensions of sustainable development should be clearly stated in policies, supported through implementation and included in reporting - all to help ensure clear integration.

- Include a summary of best practice, lessons learned, gaps and priorities, and areas where support is needed in the goal by goal analysis to facilitate learning and global partnership.

- Link implementation of the 2030 Agenda to relevant international agreements that support 2030 Agenda implementation, such as the Paris Agreement on climate change, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and global agreements on aid and international development effectiveness, including in VNR reporting.

- Provide an assessment of domestic and global dimensions of sustainable development in the goal-by-goal analysis, demonstrating contributions to realising the SDGs at home and abroad, and supporting policy coherence for sustainable development.

4.0 2030 Agenda Implementation
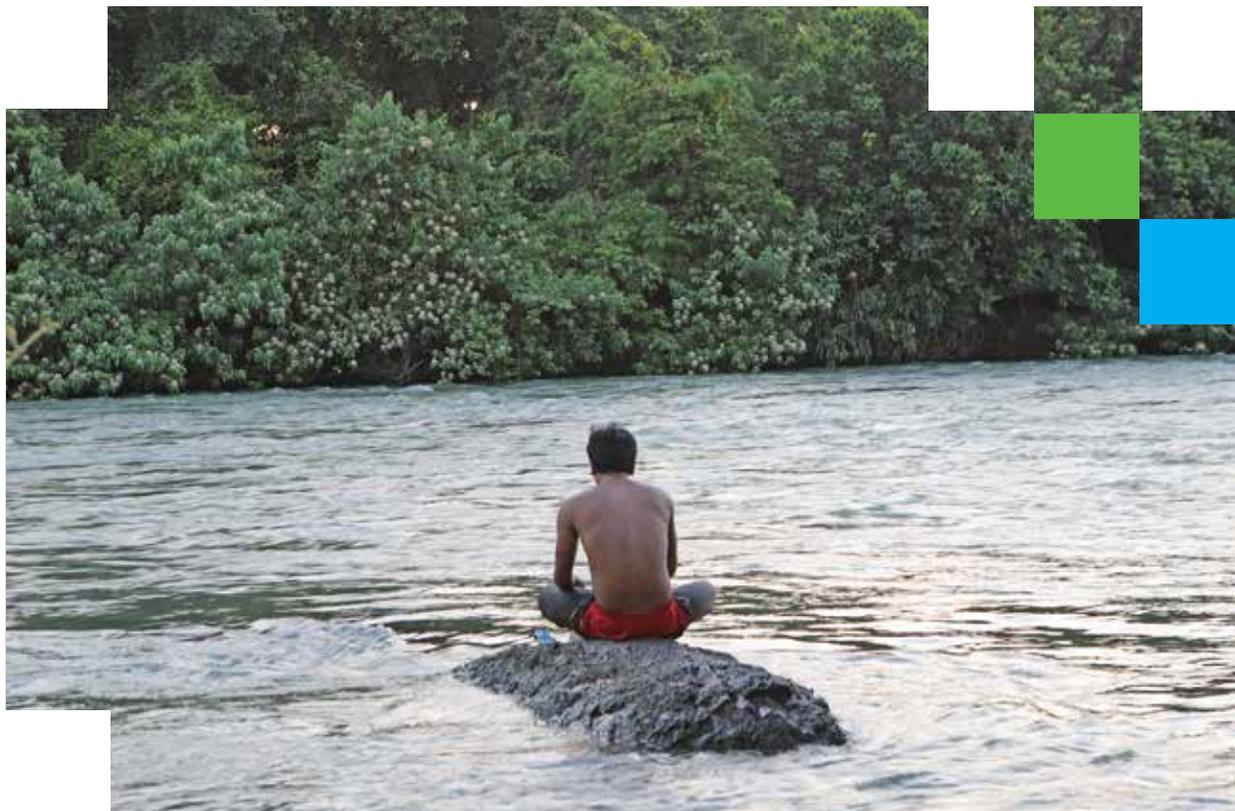
Photo: © Ranjan Ramchandani / WWF

Chapter Summary

OVERALL STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION

The majority of VNR reports (44) show evidence of change to realise the 2030 Agenda in terms of incorporating the SDGs into national policies, developing institutional mechanisms for implementation, efforts to build partnerships and/or attention to monitoring and evaluation of progress. This finding is consistent with the assessment of VNR reports in 2017.

IMPLEMENTING THE 2030 AGENDA

Most countries have not costed 2030 Agenda implementation, but they have identified public and private domestic and international sources of finance to support implementation, showing a slight improvement in numbers over 2017. More than half of the VNR reports (25) provide no information on inclusion of the SDGs in national budgets or budgeting processes. Five (5) countries provide information on how they have incorporated the SDGs into national budgets and ten countries indicated plans to incorporate the SDGs into budgeting processes.

Reporting has improved on international public finance, trade, technology and systemic issues relative to 2017. Information reported on international public finance included the amount of international public finance (official development assistance (ODA) or South-South Cooperation) provided, ODA commitments, and challenges facing countries that have graduated from ODA-eligibility due to income status. Six (6) countries noted challenges resulting from declining ODA flows. Only three countries noted efforts related to improving aid effectiveness. Unlike in 2017 when a number of countries emphasized the role of South-South and Triangular Cooperation, only two countries noted they would further explore opportunities through South-South Cooperation. Whereas countries reporting in 2017 focussed on commitments to sustainable and/or fair trade, finalisation of trade packages for developing countries, and improvements in trade capacity, countries reporting in 2018 largely focussed on the expansion of trade as a key priority, in particular on preferential access and reducing barriers to trade. Similar to 2017, countries pointed most to capacity constraints related to 2030 Agenda implementation. This included challenges in monitoring and evaluating the impacts of programmes and changing

course as necessary, and challenges in improving coordination. More countries reported on technology in 2018 than 2017, focussing on their national investments in this area. Finally, there was a marked increase in reporting on systemic issues in 2018 relative to 2017, likely as a result of the inclusion of this focus in the Secretary General's common reporting guidelines. Global financial and economic (in)stability was the most commonly cited systemic issue, followed by efforts to combat illicit capital flows.

With respect to experiences in 2030 Agenda implementation, countries report on their challenges and, to a lesser degree, best practices. Data availability and monitoring progress are the most commonly cited challenges to implementation across VNR reports, followed by mobilising financial resources. This is consistent with findings from the 2017 review of VNR reports. While there was a notable improvement in reporting on best practices in 2018, with some valuable examples provided, there are still very few countries (14 of 46) who explicitly note their lessons learned or areas in which they would like to learn from others. The provision of such information generates understanding of country needs, provides a basis on which to hold stakeholders accountable for their efforts to support 2030 Agenda implementation and assists in the identification of the best entry points for support. This is a gap that undermines the VNR process and creates a missed opportunity for making the most of HLPF discussions. The United Nations needs to explore with member states why there is underreporting on these dimensions, particularly given the focus of the HLPF follow-up and review process on knowledge and lesson sharing.

LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND

Even with the inclusion of a component on leaving no one behind in the Secretary General's common reporting guidelines for the 2018 HLPF, only 16 countries provided a detailed account of efforts to leave no one behind. As was the case in 2017, VNR reports provided little information on the status of data to leave no one behind. Women, children and youth, persons with disabilities and elderly people continue to be the most commonly cited groups at risk of being left behind. However, the emphasis placed on different groups changed in 2018, with more countries pointing to persons with disabilities and children and youth, compared to women, which was the top group cited in 2017. Beyond the most common choices of those being left behind, there was tremendous diversity in the different types of people that countries feel are being left behind, a striking increase in 2018 over 2017.

Countries also tended to highlight their existing policies and approaches to leave no one behind, rather than signal the development of new approaches. However, half of reporting countries (23) noted a mix of specialised and universal programmes. Given that combining universal policies with targeted approaches and strong leadership can be an effective approach to reaching marginalised communities, this is a positive step in the right direction. That said, this is still only the case for half of the countries reporting. Countries also highlighted a range of policies and programmes related to social protection, health, education and other initiatives. Overall, these findings suggest that countries have yet to adapt new programmes to target those left behind and are relying for the most part, on existing programmes. In 2018, we enhanced the focus of our analytical framework to determine whether governments were developing strategies to address the specific needs of different types of groups that were being left behind. We found that 20 countries noted the development or use of strategies to target specific groups. Overall, there is a need for countries to examine and adapt existing policies and programmes in light of the focus on leaving no one behind, particularly to first examine the extent to which such policies and programmes are addressing the needs of those left behind.

Information on the results of efforts to leave no one behind was in the form of specific figures on the results of programmes and initiatives, and overall trends (including data) or information (without data) on the status of progress. Reporting on efforts to reduce inequality improved substantially in 2018. Countries highlighted the use of policies and strategies to address inequality, followed by social protection.

Finally, efforts to realise gender equality as outlined in the VNR reports centre around legal instruments (31), specific policies and strategies (25), and projects and other benefits that support women (24). The status of gender-disaggregated data is still very mixed based on VNR reports.

AWARENESS RAISING AND LOCALISATION

Fewer countries reported on efforts to raise awareness of the 2030 Agenda in 2018 over 2017. That said, VNR reporting countries in 2018 continued to recognise that awareness-raising is an area for ongoing effort throughout the course of 2030 Agenda implementation and part of public engagement strategies (seven countries specifically noted that more efforts to raise awareness are needed). Countries are making use of a wide range of innovative in-person and online mechanisms, with a number of VNR reports noting the use of the VNR process to contribute to awareness-raising efforts.

Progressing national SDGs implementation

As was the case in 2017, the VNR reports continue to show a wide variance in terms of where countries and their local governments are in terms of localising the SDGs. That said, reports in 2017 compared to 2018 tended to be more detailed in terms of articulating next steps for localisation and outlining existing activities, including the status of policy development and local institutional structures for implementation. The status of local implementation efforts, as highlighted by the 2018 VNR reports, suggests that much more work is needed to promote localisation.

PARTNERSHIP TO REALISE THE SDGS

For the most part, VNR reports stress the important contributions that non-state actors and others play in 2030 Agenda implementation, similar to 2017. Reporting on the contributions from civil society, parliamentarians, the private sector and academia improved in 2018. However, only a handful of VNR reports still included contributions from non-state actors and local governments throughout. VNR reports continue to remain silent on the enabling environment for civil society, and a limited number speak to others challenges that civil society organisations face in contributing to the 2030 Agenda. Nevertheless, the range of activities (in particular, specific projects, awareness-raising and promoting accountability, particularly in the areas of independent monitoring of progress) and the variety of roles attributed to civil society organisations in terms of supporting 2030 Agenda implementation expanded in 2018. That said, the predominant focus on projects and awareness-raising demonstrates a narrow perception of the roles that civil society organisations play in broader society.

Marginally more VNRs in 2018 (relative to 2017) reported on ways in which parliaments, the private sector and academia are being engaged. The main ways parliamentarians are contributing to the 2030 Agenda include through committee work, the adoption of resolutions in support of implementation, and oversight – similar to what was reported in 2017. For the private sector, VNR reports cited specific projects, company specific commitments and participation

in multi-stakeholder partnerships. The most common examples of academic or expert contributions noted in VNR reports related to specific projects, followed by expert analysis. While reporting has improved on the contributions from academics and experts, only half of the VNR reports for 2018 included their contributions. Finally, the provision of finance (official development assistance, finance from international financial institutions and South-South Cooperation) was the most commonly cited role identified by countries for development partners, followed by technical assistance. Interestingly, twice the number of countries (14) than in 2017, explicitly noted that they received support to carry out their VNR, in partnership with the United Nations. With a few notable exceptions, VNR reports continue to not be specific enough to really inform future areas for development partner support and the establishment of partnerships, as was noted in 2017.

MEASUREMENT AND REPORTING

The majority of countries provided information on monitoring and evaluation at the national level, though less countries reported this information in 2018 than in 2017. Information on data availability, including disaggregated data, is often unclear or not articulated, similar to the findings from the review of VNR reports in 2017. Both availability and disaggregation need to be strengthened. Eleven (11) countries noted the use of a dashboard or web portal to report on data, an increase over the five countries noting this approach in 2017.

Fourteen (14) countries noted that they engage in regular reporting. Five (5) countries have given indications of when they will report next to the HLPF, including some who provided a reporting timetable. As in 2017, national reports on progress still tend to be government reports, rather than whole-of-society reports. A limited number of countries pointed to the role of parliament in reviewing progress on 2030 Agenda implementation. Some countries, including two who have reported previously, are starting to use their VNR reports to signal progress against targets.

4.1 Implementing the 2030 Agenda

Financing implementation of the 2030 Agenda includes national and international dimensions. At the national level, there is costing, budget allocations and identifying sources of finance. Domestic public resources, private investment, trade and international public finance contribute to varying degrees. In addition to financing domestic implementation, development partners also have a role to play internationally by supporting developing countries, notably through official development assistance (ODA), South-South Cooperation and by promoting fair trade, including preferential trade access where relevant.

4.1.1 Financing the 2030 Agenda

Costing 2030 Agenda implementation and identifying sources of finance assists countries in preparing realistic implementation strategies, identify financing shortfalls and setting clear expectations regarding needs when working with development partners. Figure 12 provides an overview of whether VNR reports refer to costing for domestic implementation of the 2030 Agenda and identified sources of finance for 2018 and 2017. It shows that there has been improvement in terms of the number of countries providing information on either costing and/or sources of finance (29 of 46 countries in 2018 versus 23 of 45 countries in 2017). For 2018, 12 of the countries that do not provide this information were high-income countries (the remaining five are upper- and lower-middle-income countries). This finding is consistent with VNR reporting (or lack thereof) in 2017.

Nearly half of countries (21) refer to sources of finance but have not costed out SDG implementation. This was the case for 16 countries in 2017. Poland and Viet Nam are the only countries that costed country level implementation of the SDGs and identified sources of finance. According to its VNR report, Albania plans to assess costs for SDG implementation, however the VNR report does not identify sources of finance. Bhutan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Slovakia and Spain are planning to cost SDG implementation and have identified sources of finance. For the countries that identified sources of finance, these tend to include domestic resources, private investment, and where applicable, official development assistance. Thirteen (13) countries specifically referred to the promotion of foreign direct investment or private investments, three referred to the use of public-private partnerships to realise the 2030 Agenda and four countries noted the importance of remittances.

BEST PRACTICE SPOTLIGHT
Cost out SDG implementation and identify sources of finance.

FIGURE 12. RESOURCING AGENDA

■ 2018   ■ 2017

Costed, finance sources identified
2   1

Costed, finance sources not identified
1, 0

Costing not mentioned, finance sources identified
21   16

Costing planned, finance sources identified
4   5

Costing planned, finance sources not identified
1, 0

Not articulated in the VNR
17   22

0   5   10   15   20   25   30   35   40
Number of countries
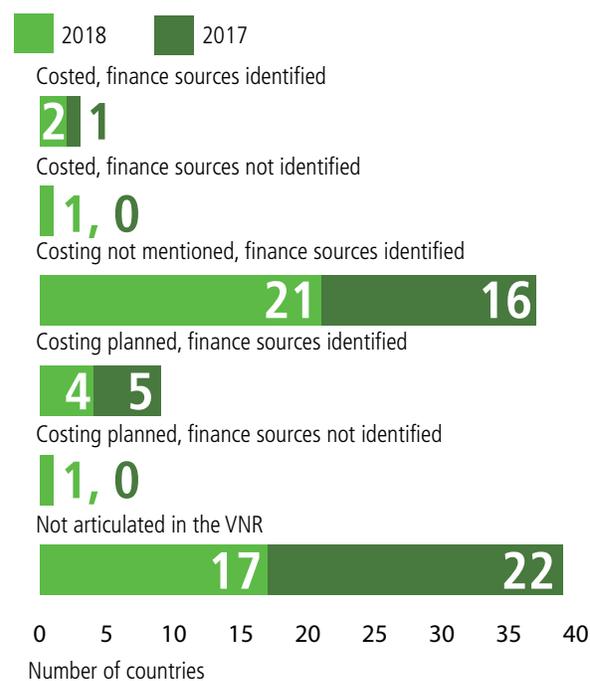
4.1.2 Finance-related means of implementation

BUDGETING FOR 2030 AGENDA IMPLEMENTATION

The inclusion of the 2030 Agenda into national (and sub-national budgets) ensures that resources are effectively allocated for implementation. Budgetary allocations also give life to government commitments and priorities, making clear the actions that are being undertaken to realise the SGDs. As such, the 2018 assessment framework for the review was updated to examine whether countries have explicitly incorporated the SDGs into their budgets. More than half of the VNR reports (25) provide no information on inclusion of the SDGs in national budgets or budgeting processes.[45] Reports for an additional 16 countries show that the SDGs have not been incorporated into budgetary processes. However, ten of these countries, including Albania, Benin, Guinea, Jamaica, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Niger, Slovakia, Spain, Sri Lanka and the State of Palestine, indicated *plans* to incorporate the SDGs into budgeting processes in their respective VNR reports. Bhutan's VNR report notes that as the SDGs are aligned with its national plans, with a significant portion of SDG financing captured by the existing budget. The Bahamas plans to analyse its budget in terms of SDG expenditures, but made no commitment to incorporating the SDGs into budgetary processes. Similarly, Mexico examined expenditures in light of the SDGs. According to Mexico's VNR report, just over 80% of the government's expenditures in 2018 contributed to the SDGs.

> **BEST PRACTICE SPOTLIGHT**
> **Assess budget allocations for SDG implementation at national and sub-national levels and incorporate and clearly denote activities aimed at realising the SDGs in budgets.**

🔴 A case study in good practice: Understanding budgetary allocations for the SDGs in Albania

Albania's VNR report includes details on budget analysis to understanding SDG expenditures. The VNR report provides an estimate of total amounts spent, according to specific policy areas, over 2015-17. The baseline mapping of expenditures indicates that a total of roughly USD $6,668 million in public spending geared towards the achievement of the SDGs occurred over 2015-17. It also showed that the main SDG related expenditures for Albania are for the social pillar, with approximately half of the total budget supporting health, education, culture and social protection. Expenditures on sustainable growth (transport, water, infrastructure and the environment) accounted for 18% of the total budget outlays, whereas good governance, democracy and rule of law expenditures accounted for 17%. Spending on competitiveness and fiscal stability accounted for just over one percent of the budget. The VNR report also includes tables and charts for spending on individual SDGs. Going forward, the government plans to further map the SDGs to its strategies and plans, including their respective budget programmes.

Source: Excerpt adapted from Albania's VNR report.

Five countries noted that the SDGs have been incorporated into budgets. These include Colombia, Ecuador, Latvia, Uruguay and Viet Nam.

- In its 2018 VNR report, **Colombia** focusses on budgeting for 2030 Agenda implementation. The country has developed a tool to track, collect and systematise budget information to quantify contributions to the SDGs.

- In **Ecuador**, the National Assembly determined the funds allocated for 2030 Agenda implementation for the 2018 budget, with expenditure related to the SDGs reaching USD 16,920 million, or 48.5% of the country's budget.

- **Latvia** has identified its investment needs according to its National Development Plan, including funding sources. Information is publicly available on the linkages between budget expenditures and government priorities.

- According to **Uruguay's** VNR report, a Budget Transparency Portal has been created that shows links between the national budget and the SDGs.

45 Ireland refers to tagging the SDGs in its international cooperation budget but does not refer to its national budget.

Progressing national SDGs implementation   **46**

- **Viet Nam's** VNR report notes that most funding for the country's Medium-Term Public Investment Plan (2016-20) supports the SDGs, however it does not provide an indication of whether specific SDGs are tagged to budget lines.

INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC FINANCE

For many countries, international public finance, including ODA, other official flows and South-South Cooperation, remains an important contributor to national sustainable development efforts. Moreover, the examination of international public finance provides an indication of how development partners see their responsibilities with respect to supporting the realisation of the SDGs globally and in developing countries. Reporting on international public finance improved in 2018 over 2017 with 44 of 46 countries providing information versus 38 of 45 in 2017.[46] For the 21 high-income countries that reported in 2018, 13 provided information on the amount of international public finance (ODA or South-South Cooperation) provided. Five (5) countries noted efforts to align development cooperation with the SDGs.

Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta and Romania re-confirmed their respective commitments to reach a 0.33% of gross national income target for ODA by 2030. Ireland re-confirmed its commitment to the United Nations target of 0.7% of gross national income. VNR reports for Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates highlighted surpassing the 0.7% target.

The Bahamas and Bahrain highlighted a continued need for international support despite their high-income status, while Uruguay's VNR report showcased contributions from international public finance to its implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Low- and middle-income countries covered a wide range of issues related to international public finance and their ongoing needs for such support. Decline in ODA flows and international support was highlighted as a challenge by Bhutan, Cabo Verde, Kiribati (who presented this issue as valuing continued support as the country graduates from least developed country status), Sri Lanka and Viet Nam. These countries noted graduation from least developed country status and/or to higher income classifications as the cause for declining support. Benin, Bhutan and Viet Nam referred to support in the areas of green finance and climate change. The Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mali and Niger referred to efforts related to improving aid effectiveness. Egypt and Senegal re-stated the international commitments made by high income countries, notably in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and with respect to the

0.7% target.[47] The Lao People's Democratic Republic and Senegal noted they would explore further opportunities through South-South Cooperation, while Namibia highlighted efforts to increase the international public finance the country receives. Cabo Verde called for reconsideration of ODA financing criteria, particularly given the vulnerability of many countries to climate change. Similar critiques of ODA criteria were made by the Bahamas, Paraguay, and Uruguay. Finally, Sudan noted that its exclusion from the Heavily Indebted Poor Country initiative is unjustifiable.

TRADE

Participation in international trade is a key strategy for realising sustainable development across countries. Moreover, the international community has committed to establishing a universal, rules-based, fair trading system that enables developing countries to reap the benefits of trade. Reporting on trade as a means of implementation also improved in 2018 compared to 2017. In 2017, 22 of 45 countries reported on trade. In 2018, 35 out of 46 countries reported. Whereas countries reporting in 2017 focussed on commitments to sustainable and/or fair trade (13), finalisation of trade packages for developing countries (five) and improvements in trade capacity (six), countries reporting in 2018 largely focussed on the expansion of trade as a key priority (21 countries). Four (4) high-income countries highlighted the importance of preferential trade access for developing countries, and in particular least developed countries. Sri Lanka and Togo noted that they had benefited from such preferential access. Six (6) countries emphasized the universal, rule-based nature of the global trading system, while five countries noted that reducing trade barriers is a priority at the country level. Three (3) countries referred to the trade facilitation efforts that benefit developing countries. Niger, Qatar, Senegal and Sri Lanka are the only countries that reported information on their trade balance or trade revenues. No country reporting in 2018 provided data on trade flows from developing countries (three countries provided this information in 2017).

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46   Albania and Colombia did not refer to international public finance in their 2018 VNR reports.

47   In 2017, five countries called on providers of ODA to meet their commitments.

4.1.3 Capacity-related means of implementation

A range of capacities are needed to implement the 2030 Agenda across governments and non-state actors. These actors face the challenge of thinking and working differently to realise the vision of sustainable development embodied by the 2030 Agenda. This includes developing new and updating existing skills and capacities, and investing in technological innovations that can support implementation and learning from others.

CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

The 2030 Agenda includes capacity development as an important means of implementation through SDG 17 on partnerships for the goals, as well as in the implementation targets related to specific SDGs. Thirty-two (32) of 46 countries reported on issues related to capacity development in 2018, the same as in 2017 for the 45 countries examined. The most common capacity challenges, noted by 13 countries, relate to local capacities for implementation, such as difficulties to monitor and evaluate the impacts of programmes and change course as necessary, and to improve coordination.[48] Goal specific capacity challenges were noted for Benin, Ecuador, Jamaica, Latvia, Sri Lanka, Uruguay and Viet Nam.[49] Andorra, Armenia, Benin, Bhutan, Kiribati, Sir Lanka and Viet Nam pointed to challenges related to 2030 Agenda monitoring or data collection. High income countries tended to note overall or specific contributions to capacity development in partner countries.[50] Bahrain and the Lao People's Democratic Republic referred to capacity development as an area requiring support in general terms. Cabo Verde, Dominican Republic and Senegal referred to improving civil society capacities.[51] While more reports referred to the role of South-South Cooperation in 2017 than in 2018, overall capacity constraints remain largely similarly for reporting over the two years.

BEST PRACTICE SPOTLIGHT
Clearly articulate specific capacity constraints to 2030 Agenda implementation and with respect to realising specific SDGs in VNR reports. Indicate the type of support needed to address capacity constraints.

TECHNOLOGY

SDG 17 on partnerships for the goals includes three targets on technology transfer to developing countries, in particular least developed countries. For the 46 countries reporting in 2018, 37 reported on technology (versus 30 of 45 countries examined in 2017). Most countries (32) reported on their national investments in technology and research and development. Namibia, Sri Lanka, and Uruguay (versus eight countries in 2017) highlighted technology transfers received or needed, while seven countries (versus eight in 2017) noted their efforts to support technology transfer.

SYSTEMIC ISSUES

Systemic issues such as global macroeconomic stability, peace and conflict, migration and illicit flows impact the capacity of countries to pursue sustainable development. In 2018, 32 of 46 countries reported on systemic issues versus 17 of 45 countries examined in 2017, suggesting a marked improvement in reporting on the key systemic issues that hinder the capacities of countries to implement the 2030 Agenda. The inclusion of a chapter on structural issues in the Secretary General's common reporting guidelines for the 2018 HLPF likely contributed to the increased attention to this area.

Global economic and financial crises or instability was the most commonly cited systemic challenge (9 of 32). This was followed by efforts to combat illicit flows (7 of 32). Four (4) countries pointed to their contributions in terms of supporting global macro-economic stability. Regional instability was cited as an issue for Egypt, Lebanon, Mexico and Niger. Armenia, Qatar and the State of Palestine noted the challenges they face owing to unfriendly relationships with their neighbours. The issues raised in the 2018 VNR reports are similar to those presented in 2017.

LEARNING FROM OTHERS

The Secretary General's voluntary common reporting guidelines suggest that countries can include information on where they would like to learn from others in the VNR reports. The inclusion of this information supports the mandate of the HLPF forum to promote learning and knowledge exchange. Learning, and a focus on what countries are keen to learn more about, still receives very little focus in any of the VNRs. In the 2017 review of VNR reports, six countries noted areas they would like to learn from others. In 2018, seven countries included reference to peer learning.

48 Armenia, Benin, Cabo Verde, Dominican Republic, Egypt, Guinea, Kiribati, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Sri Lanka, Togo, the United Arab Emirates.

49 Guinea also referred to capacity development related to risk and resilience, but more in the context of an overall strategy for the government in light of the country's climate related vulnerabilities.

50 Canada, Hungary, Ireland, Malta, Qatar, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Slovakia, Switzerland.

51 Other capacity development priorities include capacity to: engage stakeholders (Kiribati), engage civil society (Benin), coordinate with development partners (Cabo Verde), and make use of new forms of finance (Cabo Verde). Qatar pointed to efforts to improve the capacities of citizens to engage on the 2030 Agenda, including through scholarships and education-related initiatives.

- Armenia highlighted learning from others to improve data collection and monitoring of SDG implementation. Efforts with respect to harmonising data were noted in particular to facilitate the aggregation of data across countries. Armenia is interested also in the Human Rights-Based Approach to Data.

- Bahrain is interested in knowledge, innovation and culture.

- The VNR reports for Egypt and Slovakia included general comments on learning from how other countries work towards sustainable development.

- Guinea relies on the HLPF to share and discuss challenges and difficulties in 2030 Agenda implementation with the international community. The country welcomes the systematic analysis of regional aspects of sustainable development, especially emerging trends and challenges and coordinated responses and actions to address the most pressing issues. The country called on the HLPF to give more attention to sustainable development issues for low-income and fragile countries.

- The State of Palestine noted that the country would benefit from the expertise and experiences of other countries in the area of improving capacities to follow-up and review sustainable development plans based on human rights and partnerships with all stakeholders.

- Viet Nam would like to learn from the experiences of others that are more advanced in the areas of science and technology.

Rather than noting where the country could learn from others, Singapore noted a commitment to share the country's expertise and learning with international partners on issues related to the weather and climate, particularly with the relocation of the World Meteorological Organization's Regional Office for Asia and the South-West Pacific to Singapore.

4.1.4 Experiences in implementation

The Secretary General's voluntary common reporting guidelines ask member states to outline their best practices, lessons learned in accelerating implementation, challenges to 2030 Agenda implementation and what they would like to learn from peers. Reporting on these elements is critical for the promotion of peer learning and the identification of areas for greater support by domestic and international stakeholders.

Figure 13 shows that there has been improvement in reporting on best practice between countries in 2018 over 2017; but fewer countries reported on lessons learned in accelerating implementation

in 2018 than in 2017. Reporting on challenges in implementation and areas for peer learning each improved by one additional country.

BEST PRACTICE SPOTLIGHT
Report on best practice, lessons learned to accelerate 2030 Agenda implementation, challenges and areas countries would like to learn from peers.

While there have been some improvements, overall, there is room for countries to report further on where they would like to learn from others, lessons learned, and best practices. Reporting on these elements is critical to meeting the learning objectives of the HLPF. As was noted in the 2017 review of VNR reports, there continues to be a need for the United Nations to explore with member states why there is underreporting on these dimensions particularly given the focus of the HLPF follow-up and review process on knowledge and lesson sharing.

FIGURE 13. COUNTRIES HIGHLIGHTING AREAS REQUESTED IN THE COMMON REPORTING GUIDELINES FOR 2017 AND 2018

2018   2017

Best practices
21   12

Lessons learned
14   21

Challenges
37   36

Peer learning
7   6

0   10   20   30   40   50   60   70   80

Number of countries
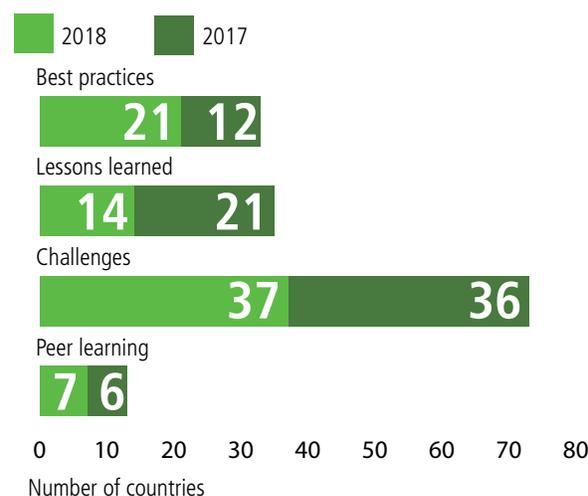
BEST PRACTICE

The identification of best practices is an opportunity for countries to showcase what works in 2030 Agenda implementation. Best practices can also provide a basis for follow-up between countries that are keen to engage in peer learning and exchanges. The information shared for best practices tends to be fairly detailed across reports, providing a good basis for understanding and learning. Some countries used detailed case studies and text boxes for this purpose. For the 21 countries, largely high-income and upper-middle-income, that presented best practice in their VNR reports, 15 highlighted specific programmes or practices related to

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the realisation of specific SDGs. The countries that identified best practices in implementation more generally are outlined in the case study below.

A case study in good practice: Reporting on best practice in 2030 Agenda implementation

Albania's VNR report points to the Mainstreaming, Acceleration, Policy Support missions as an example of best practice in United Nations Delivering-as-One to support Agenda 2030 implementation at the national level. The government notes that MAPS reports have helped to identify concrete policy and programming next steps.

Partnering with the United Nations, **Armenia** established a National SDG Innovation Lab (SDG Lab). The lab serves as an innovation platform, the first of its kind in the world, to support 2030 Agenda implementation at the country level. The lab supports experimentation, collaboration, analytics and human resource development. It also partners with innovation and technological centers worldwide to bring in the best available expertise and experience to Armenia. The VNR report also highlights Armenia's experiences incorporating SDG targets and indicators into policies and strategies as good examples of how the SDGs can be used in policymaking and linked to budgetary spending. Armenia has also developed good practice in strengthening data collection on migration through the creation of a set of proxy SDG indicators.

Bahrain established a National Information Commission to facilitate exchanges on 2030 Agenda data and indicators between institutions involved in data collection and use. This has improved the quality and credibility of official data and supported evidence-based decision-making.

Greece sees its "whole-of-government" approach to 2030 Agenda implementation as best practice. The government has established long-term institutional mechanisms for leadership and coordination on the 2030 Agenda.

Hungary's Ombudsman for Future Generations is an "exceptional" institution worldwide according to the VNR report. Founded in 2008, the Ombudsman fosters sustainable development and advocates for the interests of future generations at the national level.

Latvia considers its open and participatory processes for achieving consensus on development planning as best practice (see also case study on best practice, page 15, above).

Mali's VNR report notes that efforts to establish mechanisms for national 2030 Agenda implementation are examples of good practice. The country points to the establishment of a committee and action plan to monitor the SDGs in the National Assembly, consultations and training on the SDGs at the community level, the creation of a national platform for SDG monitoring, and efforts to strengthen the political accountability of the Office of the Chief Executive for mobilising relevant actors, setting priorities and coordinating thematic groups at the national and regional level. The VNR report also notes that five thematic groups were formed under the leadership of five Departments to lead the operational coordination of joint programmes.

Poland highlights the country's approach to partnership as best practice. The VNR report emphasizes inclusive policy making and the creation of spaces for systemic exchange of knowledge, information and good practices. The country also takes a project approach to implementing 2030 Agenda initiatives. The approach sets milestones and makes use of participatory models of cooperation.

Romania sees the use of multidisciplinary approaches and close collaboration between specialists in different fields as an example of best practice in 2030 Agenda implementation.

Sources: Excerpts adapted from the VNRs reports submitted by Albania, Armenia, Bahrain, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Mali, Poland and Romania.

CHALLENGES

Identifying challenges in 2030 Agenda implementation is an important contribution of VNR reports. Frequently cited challenges across VNR reports signal areas where more support is needed from the United Nations and development partners. Moreover, the discussion of challenges can inform expectations regarding the speed and scale of 2030 Agenda implementation and provide a basis for addressing bottlenecks in individual countries.

BEST PRACTICE SPOTLIGHT
Articulate clear and detailed challenges in 2030 Agenda implementation to inform how the country can best be supported by domestic and international communities.

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Figure 14 provides an overview of the main challenges identified in reports.[52] In most cases, countries present implementation challenges as a list of key issues without significant details provided. Greater details tend to be available for challenges identified for specific SDGs.

FIGURE 14. CHALLENGES IN SDG IMPLEMENTATION

Data constraints and monitoring progress on the SDGs remains the top challenge facing countries in 2030 Agenda implementation over 2017 and 2018. Financing is the next most commonly cited challenge, as was the case in 2017. A number of countries identified existing challenges such as poverty rates or inequality, and structural factors such as population growth, as challenges. Capacity constraints were the next most commonly cited challenge, followed by goal-specific challenges. Countries are still facing challenges with setting out the building blocks for 2030 Agenda implementation, such as harmonising policies, adapting institutional structures as

needed, engaging stakeholders and coordination at country level, including with non-state actors.

LESSONS LEARNED

Pointing to lessons learned in VNR reports is another aspect of reporting that supports peer learning. The lessons learned varied across the 14 countries that reported on this issue. Albania, Bhutan,[53] Romania, the State of Palestine and Viet Nam emphasized engaging all stakeholders for successful 2030 Agenda implementation. Mali highlighted consultation to ensure broad-based ownership, while Romania noted the importance of experts in providing evidence and analysis to inform implementation. Ecuador and Saudi Arabia pointed to the need for a long-term vision to guide efforts and the preparation of policies and initiatives that align with the SDGs. Viet Nam highlighted 2030 Agenda incorporation into overall policies and plans, while Cabo Verde noted the importance of translating the SDGs into sectoral strategies. Andorra and Ecuador emphasized the importance of coordination at the country level. The creation of appropriate mechanisms to track progress was noted by Cabo Verde, Egypt (in particular at the sub-national level) and Romania. Saudi Arabia and Viet Nam pointed to ensuring implementation occurs in line with country realities and priorities, while three countries – Albania, the Bahamas and Spain – identified accelerator policies to speed up implementation. Latvia and Spain noted approaches to address the needs of vulnerable populations. Spain highlighted bottom up, regional approaches while Latvia outlined coordinated approaches that address multiple needs for given populations. Finally, Viet Nam highlighted strong political commitment. The lessons learned in the 2018 VNR reports are largely aligned with what was reported in the VNR reports examined in 2017. In addition to the issues noted above, some countries highlighted ensuring integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development through policies and in implementation as a lesson learned.

✅ RECOMMENDATIONS

- Clearly include best practices, lessons learned in accelerating implementation, challenges going forward and where opportunities exist to learn from peers in VNR reports.

- As an essential part of the process, examine national and subnational budgets and start integrating the SDGs into them to ensure that resources are allocated for implementation. In doing so, build on the good practice in costing out SDG implementation

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52   Issues mentioned by only one country and not captured in Figure 14 include identification of accelerator actions, declining official development assistance, better management of development partner relationships, behavioral changes, fund allocation, target setting and technology transfer.

53   More specifically, multi-stakeholder partnerships.

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and identify sources of finance to implement the 2030 Agenda at country level.

- Report on all means of implementation, including clearly specifying capacity constraints. Such information is critical for assessing gaps, including in terms of identifying where greater domestic and international efforts are needed. Member states failed to meaningfully operationalise Millennium Development Goal 8 on global partnership. Member states should ensure that SDG 17 on partnerships for the goals of the SDGs is fully implemented.

- Bolster efforts to support development partners' capacity development priorities, including strengthening statistical systems and the capacities of local stakeholders to implement the 2030 Agenda.

- Scale up efforts to address systemic issues that impact SDG implementation, in particular international peace and security, illicit capital flight, tax avoidance and tax evasion, among other things.

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✋ 4.2 Leave no one behind

The revision of the Secretary General's voluntary common reporting guidelines for the 2018 VNR reports included the addition of a chapter on leaving no one behind. Given the critical importance of the leave no one behind pledge to realising the SDGs, this revision is a welcome addition. Seventeen (17) countries did not provide a chapter on leaving no one behind or significantly address the issue in other sections of their reports. These include: Armenia, Ecuador, Ireland, Kiribati, Latvia, Lebanon, Lithuania, Malta, Namibia, Poland, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Switzerland, Togo, United Arab Emirates and Uruguay. Another 12 countries did not include a chapter, but did make reference to leaving no one behind in their reports with some detail, however they did so without addressing the main components of leaving no one behind as outlined in the Secretary General's reporting guidelines. One country included a chapter on leaving no one behind but provided insufficient information therein. Finally, 16 countries – Albania, Australia, Bahrain, Benin, Bhutan, Cabo Verde, Canada, Egypt, Guinea, Jamaica Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mali, Mexico, Romania, Spain, Sri Lanka – provided a detailed account of efforts to leave no one behind, generally through a dedicated chapter.

🇨🇦 **Best case study in good practice: Defining what leaving no one behind means for Canada**
Canada's VNR moves beyond reference to the principle of leaving no one behind to defining what the principle means for the country. "For Canada, leaving no one behind means that everyone can participate in, contribute to and benefit from the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals" (p. 4). The report includes a dedicated chapter on leaving no one behind as well as sub-sections on who is being left behind or at risk of being left behind in the goal-by-goal analysis.[54]

Source: Except adapted from Canada's VNR.

BEST PRACTICE SPOTLIGHT
Follow the Secretary General's voluntary common reporting guidelines and include a chapter in the VNR report on leaving no one behind. This includes details on who is being left behind, available data, and efforts to leave no one behind and reduce domestic inequalities.

4.2.1 Data to leave no one behind
Efforts to leave no one behind should be informed by disaggregated data and efforts to improve data availability. This is important for knowing who is being left behind and monitoring progress. VNR reports for 2018 indicate that nearly one third of reporting countries (16) require additional data to leave no one behind. In 2017, 11 countries noted the need for additional disaggregated data. Thirteen (13) VNR reports seem to indicate that efforts to leave no one behind are informed by existing data. These VNR reports tend to

54   Australia also includes a sub-section on leaving no one behind in its goal-by-goal analysis.

include detailed information in terms of who is being left behind, including data, and do not indicate data challenges with respect to disaggregation. The status of data to leave no one behind is either not articulated or unclear for the remaining 17 VNR reports.

The leave no one behind index, prepared by the Overseas Development Institute, provides an impartial assessment of the status of data to leave no one behind. [55] The index looks at data, policies and finance to leave no one behind. The 2018 assessment of 86 VNR reporting countries over 2017 and 2018 showed that 65 countries have basic elements in place to leave no one behind in their context in terms of necessary data.[56] Fifteen (15) are partially ready, and five are not ready. These results, based on whether countries are undertaking necessary surveys to identify those at risk of being left behind, represent an improvement over the 2017 index. The authors attribute this to an increase in the number of countries with household surveys in the past three years.

4.2.2 Understanding who is at risk of being left behind

Identifying who is left behind (and why) enables countries to target efforts that work to ensure that all members of society benefit from progress on the 2030 Agenda. Despite the lack of information on data availability to leave no one behind, most countries (42) note the main groups in society that are vulnerable or at risk of being left behind. In 2017, 33 countries provided this information, suggesting that reporting on the main populations at risk of being left behind has improved over 2017 to 2018. At the same time, as was the case in 2017, 2018 VNR reports do not provide information on progress for identified groups across SDG targets as a general rule, with the

exception of those pertaining to SDG 5 on gender equality or for targets that have historically been disaggregated by gender, such as education. Kiribati and Sudan, both of which only submitted main messages to the HLPF, did not report on leaving no one behind. Togo and Uruguay did not list those left behind in their VNR reports. Though the VNR report for Bahrain includes information on specific groups, it also notes that there are no marginalised people in Bahrain owing to the high levels of social services provided by the government.

Table 4 provides an overview of the main groups identified as vulnerable or being left behind. It shows that persons with disabilities (34), children and youth (30), women (25), and elderly people (21) are the groups most often cited as being left behind or at risk of being left behind. The top categories of groups of people listed were the same in 2018 as 2017, however in 2017 women (28) were cited more often than persons with disabilities, followed by children and youth (27), persons with disabilities (21) and elderly people (16). In comparison to 2017, countries were also more likely to refer to a wider range of groups, as shown in the table below, such as ethnic minorities, single parent households, unemployed or lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, two spirit and/or intersex persons. Five (5) countries from Europe specifically pointed to Roma communities as left behind.

Beyond the most common choices of those being left behind, the tremendous diversity of different types and subcategories of people that countries feel are being left behind saw a striking increase in 2018 over 2017 – symbolised by the number of footnotes in the next few pages.

Photo: © Greg Armfield / WWF-UK

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55   Manuel, Marcus, Francesca Grandi, Stephanie Manea, Amy Kirbyshire and Emma Lovell. 2018. 'Leave no one behind' index 2018. Briefing note. London: ODI.

56   Monaco could not be assessed owing to insufficient data.

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TABLE 4. GROUPS IDENTIFIED AS BEING LEFT BEHIND IN THE 2018 VNR REPORTS

GROUP	COUNTRIES			
Persons with disabilities (34 countries)	ALBANIA	ECUADOR	MALI	SINGAPORE
	ANDORRA [57]	EGYPT	MEXICO	SLOVAKIA
	ARMENIA [58]	GUINEA	NAMIBIA	SPAIN [61]
	AUSTRALIA	IRELAND [59]	PARAGUAY	SRI LANKA
	BAHAMAS	JAMAICA	POLAND [60]	STATE OF PALESTINE
	BAHRAIN	LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC	QATAR	SWITZERLAND
	BHUTAN	LEBANON	ROMANIA	UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
	CABO VERDE	LITHUANIA	SAUDI ARABIA	VIET NAM
	CANADA		SENEGAL	
Children and youth (30 countries)	ALBANIA [62]	COLOMBIA	MALI	SAUDI ARABIA
	ANDORRA [63]	DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	MALTA	SENEGAL
	ARMENIA [64]	ECUADOR	MEXICO	SPAIN [73]
	AUSTRALIA [65]	EGYPT	NAMIBIA [71]	SRI LANKA
	BAHAMAS [66]	GUINEA	PARAGUAY	STATE OF PALESTINE
	BAHRAIN	JAMAICA [69]	POLAND [72]	UNITED ARAB EMIRATES [74]
	BHUTAN [67]	LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC [70]	QATAR	VIET NAM [75]
	CABO VERDE [68]		ROMANIA	

57   Students with disabilities.

58   Children with disabilities and under 18.

59   Women

60   Children and youth with disabilities.

61   Children

62   Including households with children, children of Roma and Egyptian heritage.

63   Also vulnerable girls and children in vulnerable situations.

64   Children with disabilities.

65   Youth and girls specifically mentioned.

66   Children with obesity and at-risk youth

67   Orphans, out of school children, unemployed youth, children in conflict with the law, children of single parents.

68   Young unemployed people.

69   Children living in poverty, unemployed youth, adolescents and youth.

70   Adolescent girls and children more generally.

71   Orphans and vulnerable children, school children.

72   Particularly those with disabilities.

73   Children with disabilities.

74   Orphans

75   Including orphans, abandoned children and children without nurturing care.

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GROUP	COUNTRIES			
Women (25 countries)	ALBANIA	DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	JAMAICA[78]	SAUDI ARABIA
	ANDORRA	ECUADOR	LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC	SENEGAL
	ARMENIA	EGYPT[76]	LEBANON	SRI LANKA[80]
	AUSTRALIA	GREECE	NAMIBIA[79]	STATE OF PALESTINE[81]
	BAHAMAS	GUINEA	PARAGUAY	UNITED ARAB EMIRATES[82]
	BAHRAIN	IRELAND[77]	QATAR	VIET NAM
	CABO VERDE			
Elderly people (22 countries)	AUSTRALIA	JAMAICA	MALI	ROMANIA
	BAHAMAS	LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC	MALTA	SENEGAL
	BAHRAIN	LATVIA	MEXICO	SLOVAKIA
	BHUTAN	LEBANON	NAMIBIA	SRI LANKA
	CABO VERDE	LITHUANIA	QATAR	UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
	DOMINICAN REPUBLIC			VIET NAM

76   Including rural women

77   With disabilities and migrant women.

78   Pregnant and lactating women.

79   Rural women.

80   Including women in informal employment and those that head households.

81   Including women with disabilities.

82   Including widows.

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GROUP	COUNTRIES			
Other (22 countries)	AUSTRALIA[83]	GUINEA[89]	LEBANON[95]	SINGAPORE[101]
	BAHAMAS[84]	HUNGARY[90]	LITHUANIA[96]	SPAIN[102]
	BENIN[85]	JAMAICA[91]	MEXICO[97]	STATE OF PALESTINE[103]
	BHUTAN[86]	LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC[92]	NAMIBIA[98]	UNITED ARAB EMIRATES[104]
	CABO VERDE[87]		NIGER[99]	
	COLOMBIA[88]	LATVIA	POLAND[100]	
	ECUADOR			
Migrants, refugees, internally displaced people (15 countries)	ANDORRA	CABO VERDE	GREECE	LEBANON
	ARMENIA	CANADA	IRELAND[106]	MEXICO
	BAHAMAS	DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC	SPAIN
	BAHRAIN	ECUADOR[105]		SRI LANKA
Poor people (12 countries)	ALBANIA	CANADA[107]	HUNGARY	MALI
	BAHAMAS	EGYPT[108]	LATVIA[109]	MALTA[110]
	CABO VERDE	GUINEA	LEBANON	VIET NAM

83   Veterans, carers, families with children.

84   Family island residents, men with criminal records

85   The most disadvantaged, the vulnerable and those most exposed to climate, economic or financial hazards.

86   People who beg, victims of domestic violence, those working in vulnerable places, people affected by HIV/AIDS, individuals engaging in risky sexual behavior, people using drugs and alcoholic, vulnerable urban dwellers.

87   People with dependents without an income.

88   Peasants and populations with scarce resources.

89   Vulnerable populations and future generations.

90   Vulnerable populations.

91   Untrained employees, employees under the age of 25 or over the age of 55, permanent job seekers, parents with young children.

92   Informal settlers, fisher folk.

93   Farmers with limited access to land, unskilled workers, unpaid workers.

94   Families with three or more children.

95   Non-public sector retirees, blue-collar self-employed.

96   Single persons.

97   Farmers.

98   War veterans, marginalised communities and populations affected by hunger.

99   Vulnerable groups, vulnerable people, the most vulnerable populations, and vulnerable people affected by disasters or food crises.

100 Families with many children and families where at least one carer is unemployed.

101 Low income families or individuals.

102 Those with a higher risk of falling into poverty.

103 Ex-prisoners.

104 Families of the imprisoned and those in ill health.

105 People in situations of mobility.

106 Migrant women.

107 Those likely to be in poverty not already listed above include single people aged 45-64, and single parents.

108 Low income families

109 Employed persons in poverty

110 Working poor.

GROUP	COUNTRIES			
Ethnic minorities, including indigenous peoples* (11 countries)	ALBANIA	COLOMBIA*	LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC	PARAGUAY *
	AUSTRALIA *	ECUADOR*	MEXICO*	SPAIN
	CANADA *	IRELAND[111]		VIET NAM
Particular regions or communities, including rural locations (10 countries)	AUSTRALIA	GREECE	LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC	ROMANIA
	CABO VERDE	JAMAICA[112]	NAMIBIA	SPAIN
	EGYPT			STATE OF PALESTINE
Single parent households (9 countries)	BAHAMAS	IRELAND	LITHUANIA	SRI LANKA[114]
	BHUTAN	LATVIA	POLAND	VIET NAM
	COLOMBIA[113]			
Unemployed (8 countries)	AUSTRALIA	LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC	MALTA	UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
	BAHAMAS	LEBANON	SPAIN	
	CABO VERDE			
Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/ questioning, two spirit and/or intersex persons (6 countries)	ALBANIA	CABO VERDE	IRELAND	MEXICO
	AUSTRALIA	CANADA		
Roma (5 countries)	ALBANIA	GREECE	HUNGARY	ROMANIA
				SLOVAKIA
People with HIV/AIDS (4 countries)	BHUTAN	MALI	SENEGAL	VIET NAM[115]

111 Traveller women.

112 Rural farmers.

113 Woman headed households.

114 Woman headed households.

115 From poor households.

> **A case study in good practice: Assessing those at risk of being left behind in Bhutan**
>
> In 2017, Bhutan launched its first Vulnerability Baseline Assessment 2016. The assessment aims to identify those at risk of being left behind. Bhutan is using the Vulnerability Baseline Assessment, the 2016 Climate Vulnerability Assessment and the country's 2018 Population and Housing Census to better target vulnerable populations over the next five years. Bhutan identified 14 vulnerable groups through the Vulnerability Baseline Assessment. The assessment also looked at the causes of vulnerability, reviewed policies and programmes in terms of how they help or hinder those left behind, and identified opportunities for improvement. The VNR report includes a number of recommendations for the government based on the Vulnerability Baseline Assessment, including in terms of strengthening capacities to address issues of vulnerability, improving data availability on vulnerable people, and improving legal and policy frameworks through a greater focus on vulnerabilities and inequalities.
>
> Source: Except adapted from Bhutan's VNR.

4.2.3 Approaches and efforts to leave no one behind

The analysis of approaches and efforts to leave no one behind is important for understanding the extent to which countries are adopting new methods to reach vulnerable groups in light of the 2030 Agenda. It also provides an indication of the extent to which countries are adopting approaches based on evidence of what works best to reach the furthest behind first. Most countries (41) provided information on efforts to leave no one behind versus 33 of 45 countries in 2017, suggesting an improvement in reporting in 2018, likely owing to the revised Secretary General's voluntary common reporting guidelines. Reports were assessed in terms of the extent to which efforts appear to make use of new or existing specialised programmes for particular groups, and/or universal programmes such as overarching policies or social assistance. Half of the VNR reporting countries (23) are working to leave no one behind by making use of specialised and universal approaches. Given that combining universal policies with targeted approaches and strong leadership can be an effective approach to reaching marginalised

communities, this is a positive step in the right direction;[116] that said, 23 countries did not take a similar approach, suggesting more action may be needed to develop an appropriate suite of approaches to leaving no one behind.

Nineteen (19) countries pointed to existing specialised programmes, coupled with universal programmes. Four (4) countries pointed to existing specialised programmes only, while two pointed to existing and new specialised programmes. Only two countries pointed to a mix of old and new specialised programmes as well as universal programmes. Three (3) countries pointed only to universal programmes while two countries noted universal programmes coupled with new specialised programmes. Overall, these findings suggest that countries have yet to adapt new programmes to target those left behind and are relying for the most part, on existing programmes. At a minimum, there is a need for countries to examine and adapt existing programmes in light of the focus on leaving no one behind, particularly to first examine the extent to which such programmes are addressing the needs of those left behind.

The range of efforts presented in the VNR reports is significant. Overall, no country noted how the leave no one behind approach is being translated into policies and specific actions in an overarching way, a concerning finding that has been echoed and raised as an important issue by others.[117] Ireland's VNR report noted a commitment to being guided by the right to a life of dignity for all in which people can fulfil their potential and the integration of the three pillars of sustainable development. To put these principles into practice, the VNR report highlighted a pledge by the government to leave no one behind and reach the furthest behind first.

Figure 15 provides an overview of the main activities identified in VNR reports to leave no one behind.[118] It shows that access to social services and social protection, special programmes such as employment support, and targeted plans or strategies for specific groups are the most popular approaches to leaving no one behind, followed by the use of legal instruments and improved, equal access to health and education. Cash transfers were specifically highlighted by 13 countries while ten countries noted the creation of a specific institution to lead on leaving no one behind more generally, or supporting a particularly vulnerable group. Ten (10) countries referred to provisions in their overarching national sustainable development strategy or similar.[119]

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116 Samman, Emma. 2016. 10 Things to Know about 'Leave no one Behind.' London: ODI. https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/resource-documents/11811.pdf

117 Binat Sarwar, Moizza and Susan Nicolai. 2018. *What do analyses of Voluntary National Reviews for Sustainable Development Goals tell us about 'leave no one behind'?*. London: ODI. https://www.odi.org/publications/11147-what-do-analyses-voluntary-national-reviews-sustainable-development-goals-tell-us-about-leave-no-one

118 Increased minimum wage was referred to by two countries and one country each referred to strengthening civil society organisations and localisation of the goals to leave no one behind.

119 Based on an assessment of policies related to resilience, equal access to employment, health and land, and financing for education, health and social protection, the leave no one behind index suggests that 19 countries are not ready to leave no one behind in terms of policies, while 16 countries are not ready in terms of finance.

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FIGURE 15. EFFORTS TO LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND

Category	Number of countries
Access to social services and/or social protection	20
Cash transfers	13
Establishment of a dedicated institution	10
Expanding coverage of social welfare systems	5
Focus on disadvataged regions	9
Free services such as public transportation	5
Improved, equal access to healthcare or education	17
International efforts	4
Legal instruments	17
National sustainable development policy	10
Other programmes such as employment support	20
Part of general approach, no details	4
Progressive taxation	6
Quota system for employment of persons with disabilities	4
Targeted plan or strategy for specific groups	20

Number of countries

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🇵🇾 A case study in good practice: Accountability to children and adolescents to leave no one behind

Paraguay has developed strong systems of accountability to children and adolescents over the past ten years. Recognising the human rights of girls, boys and adolescents, Paraguay seeks to foster a culture of accountability from childhood. A National Secretariat exists for children and adolescents. Administrative, political and pedagogical processes facilitate the provision of information on the use of public resources for projects that benefit young people to children and adolescents in accessible ways. Methodologies are used that promote protagonist participation (participation that enables individuals to have power over outcomes), the right to public information and the right to petition authorities. The protagonist participation of children and adolescents in public affairs guarantees the development of more democratic citizenship and a civil society that is more aware and committed to its community. Protagonist participation also makes it possible to visualise the demands of children and adolescents from their experiences and concrete realities, contributing to improved public policies from an equality and equity perspective. Paraguay's approach to accountability for children and adolescents works to leave no one behind by operationalising commitments set out in the National Constitution, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Code of Childhood and Adolescence accountability mandates.

Source: Summary provided by CEPEI based on Paraguay's VNR report.

VNR reports do not provide enough information on data to leave no one behind to evaluate the outcomes of activities. The 2018 assessment framework was updated to include a category on the results of efforts to leave no one behind to assess which policies and programmes are successfully reaching the people who are furthest behind first. Thirty-two (32) countries provided information on results for those left behind. This information is presented in the regular goal-by-goal analysis and in the chapter (where available) on leaving no one behind. Generally speaking, this information was in the form of specific figures on the results of programmes and initiatives or overall trends or information (without data) on the status of progress. With the exception of data on specific programmes, the links between specific policies and actions and the results presented are not always clear.

Nineteen (19) countries provided data on overall progress, including changes in the Gini Coefficient or incomes for particular populations, number of recipients from specific projects and other trend data, such as employment data. Given the breadth of programmes showcased, it is difficult to assess which programmes work best and could be replicated by others, particularly with the level of detail provided in reports. Nevertheless, the best practice box below

highlights some of the more impressive results in terms of leaving no one behind as highlighted in VNR reports.

A case study in good practice: Reporting the results of efforts to leave no one behind

In **Canada**, the after-tax Gini coefficient showed a reduction from 0.314 in 2015 to an estimated 0.306 in 2016. The bottom wage quintile had the highest rate of real hourly wage growth at +1.8% in 2017, while the fourth and fifth quintiles had practically no growth at 0.0% and +0.1%. The market income share of the bottom 90% of income earners has not changed significantly since 2000, though since the 1980s the top 10% of income earners have seen substantial gains. The Guaranteed Income Supplement has helped to lift 57,000 seniors out of poverty.

In **Latvia**, people at risk of social exclusion was 28.2% in 2016, a fall of 10% since 2010. Families with two adults and three or more children have seen a reduction in their risk of poverty, though single parent households remain at high risk. People over 65 continue to be at risk of poverty, with rates increasing (39.9% in 2016), and women are more likely to be at risk of poverty (45.1%) than men (29.1%). Despite improvements in income inequality, Latvia will not meet the targets it has set for itself in this area by 2020.

In **Mali**, 1,056,441 people have benefited from Mandatory Health Insurance, representing 33.88% of the country's target for 2016. The Medical Assistance Plan has 192,580 beneficiaries or 21% of its target in 2016. In 2016, 251,643 of the poorest households received cash transfers.

The number of vulnerable households that received economic grants progressed under **Senegal's** National Family Security Grant Programme in 2017, but the target was not reached (71%). The coverage rate for universal health coverage was 49.3% in 2017, up from 46.8% in 2016. The prevalence of moderate to severe food insecurity decreased from 28% in 2015 to 16% in 2016.

Singapore has seen impressive income growth for those in the lowest 10%. Their real per capita household income increased by 30.2% between 2007 and 2017. The 20th percentile of full-time employed residents saw income growth of 4.2% per annum in real terms over 2012-17.

The **State of Palestine** reported that between 2000 and 2015, the average salary in the West Bank increased by 34%. While daily wages increased by only 17% in the Gaza Strip.

Source: Except adapted from VNR reports for Canada, Latvia, Mali, Senegal, Singapore and the State of Palestine.

4.2.4 Targeting domestic inequality

Addressing inequality is a fundamental part of the 2030 Agenda as a means to leave no on behind and as part of SDG 10 on reduced inequalities. While only 23 of 45 examined countries referred to efforts to reduce inequality in 2017, 37 countries reported on this dimension in 2018. This likely reflects, in part, the greater coverage of all SDGs in 2018 VNR reports versus 2017. The use of policies and strategies to address inequality was cited by 21 countries, followed by social protection (19), special programmes such as housing support (13), access to universal education or activities that promote education (12), and legal instruments (12). Ten (10) VNR reports noted that addressing inequality is part of their respective governments' overall priorities. Other efforts to reduce inequality include progressive taxation (seven), access to healthcare (seven countries), establishing or raising the minimum wage (six), employment services (five) and the creation of a dedicated institution or institutional structures that focus on inequality and related issues (five). In 2017, the 23 countries that address inequality highlighted government strategies to address inequality (eight), special programmes that target groups facing inequality (eight), social protection schemes (six) and legislation (two).

4.2.5 Realising gender equality to leave no one behind

To improve analysis on gender equality (in terms of leaving no one behind), the 2018 assessment framework for the review was updated to include two sub-components in this area. The first was an assessment of the status of gender-disaggregated data based on the information presented in the VNR reports. The second included listing the efforts noted in VNR reports to improve gender equality. The inclusion of gender equality as a specific sub-component of leaving no one behind in the analysis is grounded in a recognition of the critical importance of gender equality and women's rights as an outcome and means to realise sustainable development. The Secretary General's voluntary common reporting guidelines also refer to giving particular attention to women and girls.

Based on a review of data available in the VNR reports, the review found that gender-disaggregated data is available consistently for seven countries, most of the time for eight countries and not available or rarely available for seven countries. The status of gender-disaggregated data is unclear for 19 VNR reports, largely because the reports present sometimes conflicting information, such as detailed data for SDG 5 on gender inequality, but no disaggregated data for other goals; or in the text they note further efforts are

Photo: © Greg Armfield / WWF-UK

needed to produce gender-disaggregated data, but still present a fair amount of data in the VNR report. Gender-disaggregated data or commentary on gender-disaggregated data is unavailable for five VNR reports.

The majority of countries (40) include information on efforts to realise gender equality. Legal instruments that guarantee gender equality were cited by 31 countries. Twenty-five (25) countries noted the existence of a specific strategy or policy related to gender equality, such as for the promotion of women's economic empowerment or reduction in domestic violence. Just over half of the countries (24) highlighted specific projects or benefits that support women, such as micro loans, training, child care benefits, or parental leave. Twenty (20) countries highlighted the creation of new institutions that address gender equality issues or the establishment of gender units across government departments. Other initiatives include gender budgeting (12), mainstreaming gender equality into policies and planning (ten), awareness-raising (nine), improving gender-disaggregated data and monitoring (eight), international development cooperation efforts (seven), quota systems (seven, largely for electoral politics but also in some countries on boards) and inclusion of gender equality as a priority in overarching government plans and strategies (five).

MAINSTREAMING GENDER EQUALITY

STRATEGIES OR POLICIES

INTERNATIONAL EFFORTS

PROJECTS

AWARENESS-RAISING

DATA AND MONITORING

NEW

GENDER BUDGETING

INSTITUTIONS

QUOTA SYSTEMS   **OVERARCHING PRIORITY**

✅ RECOMMENDATIONS

- Include a specific chapter on leaving no one behind in VNR reporting and demonstrate how the leave no one behind approach is being translated into action in an overarching way.

- Provide information on the status of data collection or plans to improve data availability to inform efforts to leave no one behind. This includes information on gender-disaggregated data. Approaches to gathering qualitative assessments, especially for populations for whom data is not available should also be presented. Such efforts could include engagement with key experts and representatives of marginalised groups. Ensuring no one is left behind means knowing who is being left behind, by how much, and in what areas.

- Highlight existing and planned efforts to leave no one behind, including how policies and programmes are being adapted, and in particular new approaches developed, to first reach the people who are furthest behind.

- Develop a mix of targeted and universal approaches to leaving no one behind, drawing on the latest evidence of what works and best practice.

- Report on the outcomes of efforts to leave no one behind, including by drawing on civil society expertise and citizen-generated data. Clearly present links between specific policies and actions with results.

- Target domestic inequality in 2030 Agenda implementation, including in support of SDG 10 on reduced inequalities, and outline the current status of domestic inequality and how it is being addressed in VNR reports.

- Adopt a range of internationally recognised best practices to promote gender equality, such as gender budgeting, gender-based analysis and mainstreaming into policies and plans, and appropriate legal, policy and institutional frameworks.

4.3 Awareness raising and localisation

Raising awareness of the 2030 Agenda and educating citizens on sustainable development is critical for establishing a national vision for sustainable development, generating support, and promoting whole-of-society approaches to implementation. It also contributes to localisation and can inform the activities local governments and citizens can take to promote sustainable development in local communities. Localisation also requires coordination between different levels of government, and as was shown in the 2017 review, financial support and capacity development for local governments to effectively participate.

4.3.1 Awareness raising

Awareness-raising requires ongoing attention over the course of 2030 Agenda implementation, as was noted in a number of 2017 VNR reports. While reporting on awareness-raising improved in 2017 VNR reports over 2016,[120] less countries reported on this dimension in 2018. Forty-one (41) countries out of 45 reported in 2017 whereas 38 of 46 countries reported awareness-raising activities in 2018. Canada, Ecuador, Poland, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the State of Palestine, Switzerland, and Togo do not refer to awareness-raising efforts on the 2030 Agenda. Niger and Spain have not raised awareness of the 2030 Agenda. Niger plans to launch a series of activities to strengthen stakeholder understandings of the challenges that need to be addressed to achieve the 2030 Agenda. The country also plans to prepare a communications plan for the general public. Spain's VNR report noted that there was no need to raise awareness of the 2030 Agenda given existing high levels of awareness. Nevertheless, the country plans to develop communication plans and will monitor knowledge of sustainable development and the 2030 Agenda among citizens periodically.

The most commonly cited form of awareness-raising was technical or localisation workshops with stakeholders in government and beyond on 2030 Agenda implementation (10 countries). Nine (9) countries referred to the VNR process as part of awareness-raising efforts. Another nine countries noted education activities – either existing or planned. A number of countries (eight) highlighted events that had been carried out. Hungary noted that the translation of the 2030 Agenda into Hungarian was an important part of raising public awareness. Mali, Namibia and Senegal noted that they plan to translate the 2030 Agenda into local languages. Six (6) countries have prepared or plan to prepare an education and communications strategy. Consultations, in particular on SDG priorities, were noted as a method to raise awareness by four countries. Two (2) countries noted plans to establish an online platform while one country highlighted that it had already done so. VNR reporting countries in 2018 continued to recognise that awareness-raising is an area for ongoing effort throughout the course of 2030 Agenda implementation and part of public engagement strategies (seven countries specifically noted that more efforts to raise awareness are needed).

> **BEST PRACTICE SPOTLIGHT**
> **Go beyond consultation meetings to raise awareness of the 2030 Agenda, such as through the use of media and social media, competitions and roadshows.**

> **BEST PRACTICE SPOTLIGHT**
> **Develop a communication and engagement strategy to continue to raise awareness of and ownership over the 2030 Agenda with a wide range of stakeholders over the course of SDG implementation.**

120 Cutter 2016 found that only 11 out of 16 VNR reports referred to awareness-raising.

A case study in good practice: Innovative and interesting ways to raise awareness on the 2030 Agenda and engage the general public

The 2017 VNR reports highlighted the use social media, and media – television and radio – to raise public awareness. Some countries reporting in 2017 created online portals on the SDGs. Other initiatives included an SDG roadshow, an SDGs photo contest and an SDG Awards programme that encouraged non-state actors to submit project ideas for SDG implementation.

The 2018 VNR reports similarly showcased initiatives to raise awareness of the 2030 Agenda and educate the public on sustainable development.

Egypt created a mobile application "Sharek" (participate) to allow citizens, particularly youth, to raise awareness of sustainable development and participate in the review of its Strategy for Sustainable Development.

Ireland plans to identify SDG Champions – individuals who can leverage their public profile to raise awareness of the goals.

Lithuania has organised documentary film festivals, photo exhibitions, interactive events, "brain fights" and discussions to raise awareness of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. The government makes use of television and radio shows, as well as social media to disseminate information. For example, advertisements on the 2030 Agenda have been shown on television, in cinemas and through public transport. The country also makes use of a major annual conference on development cooperation that brings together civil society, academia, the private sector and government. The conference themes for 2016 and 2017 focussed on the 2030 Agenda.

Jamaica's VNR report outlined the creation of a Communication and Advocacy Roadmap (2018-21) to raise awareness of the 2030 Agenda. The public was also engaged on the new agenda in 2017 through a Dialogue for Development Series that focussed on the theme "The Jamaica We Want." The VNR report also noted the creation of an SDGs promotional video that was circulated on social media and included a call to action.

In **Latvia**, an education campaign supported by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, "The World's Largest Lesson," has been underway for three years. The campaign brings together around 50 educational institutions and 3,000 children, young people and teachers. The

initiative includes lessons on the SDGs and interactive classes, hikes, concerns, fairs and other events.

Andorra has also undertaken education for sustainable development initiatives. Sustainable development has been integrated into formal education. Approximately 6,200 students participate in activities organised by Andorra Sostenible Center (Andorra Sustainability Center) and the Ministry of the Environment, Agriculture and Sustainable Development.

In **Paraguay**, youth participated in a learning day on the SDGs and meetings were held with students from agricultural schools in the interior of the country to discuss specific SDGs.

Source: Compiled by author from referenced countries' VNR reports.

4.3.2 Localisation of the 2030 Agenda

Rooting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in local priorities and activities at the community level makes the agenda meaningful, practical and impactful in the day-to-day lives of citizens. The majority of countries (30) provided information on efforts to localise the 2030 Agenda (33 of 45 countries provided this information in 2017). As was the case in 2017, the VNR reports continue to show wide variance in terms of where countries and their local governments are in terms of localising the SDGs. The status of local implementation efforts, as highlighted by the VNR reports, suggests that more work is needed to promote localisation. Countries whose VNR reports suggested relatively strong advancement on localisation include Benin, Greece and Spain. Their VNR reports include dedicated sections on efforts by local governments, moving beyond the presentation of vignettes. They show that many local governments in Greece and Spain are advanced in terms of incorporating the SDGs into policies and programmes.

A case study in good practice: Localising the 2030 Agenda in Benin

In Benin, a benchmarking process in 15 municipalities, and a process of capitalising on experiences in 22 municipalities, was initiated to assess the implementation of the SDGs at the local level. This exercise was applied to five thematic SDGs reviewed in depth during the 2018 HLPF and to SDG 13 (climate action) and 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions). The government organised technical workshops to support and train municipalities in ten regions of the country on integrating the SDGs into local development planning documents.

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Benin has also established the Joint Community-Government Coordination Framework on the SDGs (Cadre de coordination Commune-Gouvernement sur les ODD). The Framework consists of a technical SDG commission set up within the National Association of Municipalities of Benin where mayors and officials involved in the national coordination of the SDGs examine implementation in municipalities. The Framework meets once every quarter and serves as an advocacy platform for SDG action at the sub-national level.

Source: Summary provided by IISD based on Benin's VNR report.

Figure 16 provides an overview of the main elements of localisation reported in VNR reports.

FIGURE 16. STATUS OF 2030 AGENDA LOCALISATION

For the 16 countries that referred to incorporating the 2030 Agenda into local plans and policies, six have done so while ten noted intentions to do so. A limited number of countries (four) are making use of SDG indicators at the local level while one country noted plans to this effect. Some countries (three) reported examples of local initiatives that contribute to the 2030 Agenda or sustainable development more generally but did not refer to the overall status of localisation. A limited number of countries (three) noted the use of platforms or coordination forums to engage local governments or build local capacity. Some countries (four) only stated that local governments have been engaged in the VNR and/or SDG prioritisation processes but did not articulate further activities at the local level. Whereas eight countries noted that further engagement with local government is a next step in their implementation process in 2017, this was only the case for one country in 2018. Overall, reports in 2017 tended to be more detailed in terms of articulating next steps for localisation and outlining existing activities, including the status of policy development and local institutional structures for implementation.

🇸🇳 A case study in good practice: Supporting localisation in Senegal

According to the civil society report produced for Senegal's VNR, in December 2017, the Association of Mayors of Senegal (AMS) mandated experts to carry out studies on various themes related to the SDGs to help local elected officials make better decisions, ensure coherence in local development policies, and increase SDG ownership with a view to promoting local development.

Source: Excerpt adapted from Plateforme des organisations de la société civil pour le suivi des Objectifs de Développement Durable (2018). Original story available at: http://localizingthesdgs.org/story/view/165. [121]

✅ RECOMMENDATIONS

- Continue to promote, or immediately begin adopting, innovative ways to raise awareness of the SDGs among the general public with a view to long term engagement, including in partnership with civil society and other non-state actors.

- Provide support to sub-national levels of government to raise awareness of the SDGs, strengthen local institutional structures and resources for implementation, and further develop capacities for local level implementation, including translation of the SDGs into local plans, programmes, and monitoring efforts.

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⊘ 4.4 Partnership to realise the SDGs

As previously noted, partnership is a critical element of implementing the 2030 Agenda and its principles. Most countries agree that contributions are needed by all stakeholders in society if countries are to realise the SDGs by 2030. As such, VNR reports should include and showcase contributions from a wide range of stakeholders towards the 2030 Agenda.

The 2017 review of VNR reports found that most were government reports that focus on the activities of the highest level of government with some reference to the activities of local government and non-state actors. Overall, this trend continued for reporting in 2018. Nevertheless, the VNR reports for Canada, Jamaica, and Egypt included contributions from non-state actors and often local governments throughout, emphasising their roles and contributions in the goal-by-goal analysis. Greece's VNR report included a dedicated chapter on the contributions from non-state actors with a wide range of examples. The inclusion of activities by a wide range of stakeholders provides a national picture of implementation efforts, including and moving beyond government. This approach to VNR reporting respects the principles of inclusivity and participation embedded in the 2030 Agenda.

BEST PRACTICE SPOTLIGHT
Submit a *national* report for the VNR that systematically outlines the contributions made by a wide range of stakeholders, not just the national government.

4.4.1 Non-state actor participation in SDG implementation

All countries, with the exceptions of Bahrain, Benin, Guinea, Kiribati, Namibia, Senegal, and Sudan provide information on local non-state actor participation in implementation beyond consultation on priorities and participation in governance arrangements.[122] As was the case in 2017, for the most part, all VNR reports stressed the important contributions of non-state actors and others (even those that did not provide specific examples of partnership), and the need for multi-stakeholder partnership for 2030 Agenda implementation.

🇧🇸 **A case study in good practice: Multi-stakeholder partnerships to leave no one behind in the Bahamas**
The Over the Hill project in Nassau, Bahamas, works to address key challenges in an economically depressed area characterised by high unemployment levels, high crime rates, low income and infrastructure dilapidation. Working with civil society, academia and the private sector, the government developed a comprehensive poverty alleviation pilot project focussing on social and economic empowerment, rejuvenation, smart and green technology, and programmes which focus on youth and the elderly. The project aims to improve preschool education, solid waste management, water availability, and management and maintenance of public parks. A white paper on tax incentives will also be prepared for the community and community support programmes will be strengthened. The government has committed $5 million per annum from the national budget to fund the initiative. The private sector will be able to contribute through a planned fund. The local community is deeply involved, resulting in high levels of local participation and ownership.

Source: Summary provided by CEPEI based on the VNR report for the Bahamas.

122 This section deals with the forms of engagement and participation that have not yet been addressed in the earlier sections of the report – as such looking beyond engagement through consultation and governance arrangements.

🇸🇰 **A case study in good practice: An enabling environment for partnership in Slovakia**

The VNR report for Slovakia emphasizes building partnerships with the private sector, civil society and the scientific community. It notes that "partnerships and synergies between various stakeholders can supplement missing capacities and bring additional resources necessary for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. [The country] is therefore dedicated to sustaining an enabling environment for the creation of partnerships" (p. 9). The country plans to increase involvement by parliament and partnerships with civil society. The government has also adopted a micro-granting scheme to encourage voluntary activities aimed at sustainability by citizens. Projects supported by the scheme will focus on sustainable development and be implemented by local communities, schools and civil society organisations. The country also has a Volunteer of the Year Award, which included a special category on the 2030 Agenda in 2018 for the first time. An award programme also exists for the private sector to raise awareness among the business sector and to encourage socially and environmentally responsible business conduct.

Source: Except based on Slovakia's VNR report.

4.4.2 Civil society

Civil society organisations play a number of roles in supporting 2030 Agenda implementation, including representing and advocating for citizens and those left behind, contributing to policy development, implementing projects and programmes and promoting accountability through independent analysis and reporting, among other things. The review examined the enabling environment for civil society to realise these roles in 2030 Agenda implementation, as well as the contributions made by civil society as highlighted in different VNR reports and civil society reports prepared in parallel for the HLPF.

ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

While civil society is listed as contributing to 2030 Agenda implementation for a majority of the 2018 VNR reports (discussed further below), in general, VNR reports do not refer to the importance of fostering an enabling environment for civil society

to realise its full potential to contribute to the SDGs. A notable exception is Ireland's VNR report. It notes that "Ireland recognises that civil society space has come under increasing pressure in many parts of the world in recent years and in some countries, dialogue with civil society remains limited and the space for civil society engagement is either narrow or shrinking" (p. 99). Furthermore, Ireland has made the protection of civil society space a foreign policy priority and advocates for an enabling environment for civil society at the international level.

The enabling environment for civil society is a major issue in 23 of the countries that reported to the HLPF in 2018. Of the 41[123] countries reporting to the HLPF in 2018 that were assessed by the CIVICUS Monitor, only eight are considered "open" – that is, the state enables and safeguards civic space.[124, 125,] In ten countries, the space for civil society is "narrowed" meaning that the rights to freedom of association, and peaceful assembly and expression have been subject to violations.[126] More than half of the countries for which reviews are available are evaluated to be "obstructed," "repressed" or "closed." Among these, 13 countries are deemed to be obstructed – in which "civic space is heavily contested by power holders, who impose a combination of legal and practical constraints on the full enjoyment of fundamental rights."[127] Four (4) countries are rated as "repressed", or those in which civic space is heavily constrained and civic engagement can lead to harassment, intimidations, imprisonment, injury and death.[128] Finally, six countries were ranked as "closed" which refers to a situation when there is a complete closure of civic space in law and practice with an atmosphere of fear and violence prevailing.[129]

THE ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN VNR REPORTS

VNR reports provide an indication of how governments see the role of civil society in contributing to 2030 Agenda implementation. Most VNR reports (30) provided information on specific partnerships and initiatives carried out by civil society to realise the SDGs. Twenty-five (25) countries provided this information in 2017. Figure 17 provides a comparison of the most commonly cited activities carried out by civil society in 2017 and 2018. It shows an improvement in terms of the variety of roles attributed to civil society organisations in terms of supporting 2030 Agenda implementation in 2018. While specific projects and awareness-raising were the most often

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123 Canada, Ecuador, Egypt, Lithuania and Senegal are currently under review.

124 Andorra, Australia, Cabo Verde, Ireland, Kiribati, Malta, Switzerland and Uruguay (Uruguay's rating improved from narrowed in 2017).

125 See https://monitor.civicus.org/Ratings/ for a full description of ratings.

126 Albania, Bahamas, Greece, Jamaica, Latvia, Namibia, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, and Spain.

127 Armenia, Benin, Bhutan, Dominican Republic, Guinea, Hungary, Lebanon, Mali, Niger, Paraguay, Singapore, Sri Lanka, and Togo.

128 Colombia, Mexico, Qatar and the State of Palestine.

129 Bahrain, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, United Arab Emirates and Viet Nam.

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emphasized contributions, some 2018 VNR reports also recognised the role of civil society organisations in providing guidance and tools for 2030 Agenda implementation, including through toolkits, websites and events. The role of civil society organisations in promoting accountability, particularly in the areas of independent monitoring of progress was noted by seven countries. A limited number of countries also highlighted areas absent in 2017, namely participation in multi-stakeholder partnerships or initiatives, incorporation of the SDGs into institutional operations and priorities, and promotion of structured dialogue. While a wider range of the roles of civil society organisations was recognised across 2018 VNR reports, the continued focus on contributions in terms of specific projects and awareness-raising activities is a narrow perception of the roles that civil society organisations play in broader society.

FIGURE 17. CIVIL SOCIETY CONTRIBUTIONS HIGHLIGHTED BY COUNTRIES IN VNR REPORTS, 2017 AND 2018

2018   2017

2 3	Advocacy
11 7	Awareness raising
4 9	Forming coalitions
6 0	Providing guidance/prepare tools on implementation
4 1	Knowledge sharing
3 0	Incorporating the SDGs into institutional operations
4 0	Participation in multi-stakeholder partnerships initiatives
7 2	Promoting accountability
1 0	Promoting structured dialogue
3 1	Recipient of funding to implement the SDGs
2 1	Research
Specific projects 20 11	

0   5   10   15   20   25   30   35
Civil society contributions

CONTRIBUTIONS HIGHLIGHTED IN CIVIL SOCIETY REPORTS

Parallel civil society reports also showcase a range of contributions from civil society to the 2030 Agenda and provide examples of effective delivery by civil society organisations. For example, the civil society report for Canada provides a number of examples of concrete initiatives taken by civil society organisations, including specific projects, advocacy activities and awareness-raising to support 2030 Agenda implementation. Civil society organisations in Colombia are contributing through multi-stakeholder partnerships and by mobilising citizens towards more sustainable lifestyles. In Bhutan, civil society organisations are aligning their plans with the SDGs and implementing them in accordance with available funds. The civil society report for the Dominican Republic highlighted the roles of civil society organisations in ensuring accountability for 2030 Agenda implementation, working to leave no one behind and carrying out projects. In Malta, civil society organisations worked in partnership with the government and the European Commission to strengthen the capacity of the government and civil society to contribute to the 2030 Agenda at national and sub-national levels and raise awareness of the global agenda. Civil society organisations in Mexico noted their contributions in terms of supporting consultations on the 2030 Agenda and disseminating information, promoting dialogue between civil society and the government, monitoring progress, research, analysis and the formulation of proposals and positions, input into government reports to the United Nations and other relevant multilateral forums, and advocacy. They have also indicated their intention to participate in implementation, follow-up and the design of national indicators with the government, and prepared a proposal for a Civil Society Participation Mechanism for dialogue. In 2016, the National Institute of Social Development launched a programme to strengthen the capacities of civil society to contribute to the 2030 Agenda. An action plan on the SDGs was prepared by civil society organisations in Senegal. The plan includes flagship actions such as translation of the SDGs into local languages, a series of meetings and capacity building sessions for civil society organisations, grassroots community organisations, youth and women's associations, people living with disabilities, local elected officials and traditional communicators. The platform also invests in community radio stations, social media (Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp) and produces communications materials. Futuro en Común, a civil society platform in Spain, has been working to promote the 2030 Agenda since 2030. Civil society organisations in the country hope to contribute to implementation through their diverse roles and be included as a fundamental part of the follow-up and review process. Finally, in Togo, civil society organisations worked on raising awareness on the SDGs through training workshops organised by various youth and women's groups.

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Awareness-raising activities were also organized for the general public by the Working Group of Civil Society Organizations for the SDGs (GTOSC-ODD) and its members. The Togo report also highlights specific SDG-related projects supported by Togolese civil society organisations.

Civil society reports also highlighted case studies on effective delivery by civil society organisations in 2030 Agenda implementation.

- In **Bhutan**, the Tarayana Foundation has worked to help many villages alleviate poverty. The Disabled Persons' Association of Bhutan has contributed to ensuring that persons with disabilities enjoy a decent life and independence, contributing to leaving no one behind.

- **Canada's** civil society report provides a wide range of examples of civil society efforts towards the 2030 Agenda, particularly with respect to the environmental dimensions of the 2030 Agenda. One example includes efforts by environmental non-governmental organisations and Indigenous Peoples to conserve the Great Bear Rainforest on Canada's west coast. Advocacy efforts, protests against industrial logging and mining activities in the region, and collaboration between civil society organisations, the private sector, Indigenous Peoples and the provincial government led to the Great Bear Rainforest Agreements. The region is now characterised by a strong network of protected areas, sustainable forestry management, support for Indigenous Peoples' economic diversification in the region and greater decision-making power on land use in the hands of Indigenous Peoples in the region.

- The civil society report for **Colombia** showcases a number of examples of civil society delivery on the 2030 Agenda. One example is the Low Carbon City, a global citizen movement that builds collective solutions to address climate change in cities. The initiative focusses on informing citizens using creative, participatory and artistic tools to encourage climate-friendly lifestyles.

- The Roundtable of Hungarian Civil Society Organisations for the Sustainable Development Goals has launched the first dedicated website to the 2030 Agenda in **Hungary**. The website reports on 80 indicators on national 2030 Agenda implementation and provides information on the commitments of more than 75 civil society organisations in the country.

- **Togo's** civil society report highlights various examples of effective civil society delivery on the SDGs. Civil society organisations have launched a Community Access to Sustainable Energy Programme (Programme d'accès des communautés à l'énergie durable - PACED) that aims to give access to sustainable and clean energy to vulnerable people. The non-governmental organisation STADD has developed a project to establish a plastic waste collection, sorting and recycling unit in the city of Lomé. Since the project's launch in 2013, seven collection units have been created in several districts of Lomé and a recycling unit has been opened. The project has also led to the collection and recycling of 500 tonnes of plastic waste, and raised awareness among 3,000 households about recycling.

- The civil society report prepared for **Viet Nam** argued that the VNR report could have better incorporated initiatives by non-state actors. The civil society report provides a number of examples of initiatives by civil society that support the 2030 Agenda. World Vision International is working to reduce malnutrition in the rural mountainous region of Viet Nam. The organisation is working with the government to educate communities on child nutrition, leverage local resources and link caregivers to livelihood opportunities. The initiative makes use of Nutrition Clubs, 1139 of which have been established across 25 project districts and have supported first 1000 days of life interventions. The initiative has seen positive results, having rehabilitated 418 children at the end of 2017. Accessibility to nutritious food has improved in 16 districts and 209 villages have implemented integrated water, sanitation and hygiene interventions.

CHALLENGES FOR EFFECTIVE CIVIL SOCIETY DELIVERY ON THE 2030 AGENDA

Parallel civil society reports also provide useful insights on the challenges civil society organisations face in contributing to the 2030 Agenda. In 2017, civil society reports noted a range of challenges that prevent CSO delivery of the 2030 Agenda, including low levels of awareness of the agenda by the public, civil society and government, limited finance, insufficient participation and lack of government alignment with the agenda. Figure 18 provides an overview of the main challenges identified in 2018.[130]

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130 The challenges facing civil society in Lebanon were noted in the VNR report. The civil society report for Togo does not specifically note challenges, however commentary on SDG 16 on peace justice and strong institutions suggests that improvements in governance would positively impact the work of civil society organisations.

FIGURE 18. CHALLENGES TO CSO DELIVERY OF THE 2030 AGENDA

AWARENESS, ENGAGEMENT AND COORDINATION

- **Colombia**: Low awareness of the SDGs among civil society organisations; greater dialogue and cohesion are required within civil society to clarify its role

- **Dominican Republic**: Low awareness of the implementation processes among civil society organisations

- **Ireland**: Ensuring effective participation in the development of implementation plans; sufficient resourcing of the 2030 Agenda engagement mechanism; and establishing clear modalities for multi-stakeholder engagement

- **Lebanon**: Limited linkages between government, civil society, the private sector and academia

- **Sudan**: Poor coordination within civil society and with the private sector

- **Senegal**: Assessing and coordinating activities of all stakeholders in 2030 Agenda implementation; efforts needed to mobilise stakeholders and establish multi-stakeholder partnerships; institutionalising the role of civil society in planning, implementation and monitoring

- **Viet Nam**: Exclusion from governance arrangements, and needing to preparae a formal framework for engaging civil society

LACK OF ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

- **Lebanon**: Corruption; lack of transparency and good governance; outdated legislation; centralisation; limited access to data

- **Mexico**: Addiitonal efforts needed to promot civil society organisations within the framework fo enabling environment strengthening

- **State of Palestine**: Shrinking space for civil society and increasing government control of the judiciary; affiliation with the private sector

- **Sudan**: Civil society margainalised by government instititutions

- **Togo**: improvements to governance and access to information needed

LACK OF TRUST

- **Sudan**: Discrepencies in statistics used; failure to use civil society knowledge; capacity building programmes implemented by government and international partners not successful

INSTITUTIONAL PREPAREDNESS

- **Colombia**: Local development planning follows a sectoral logic that favours fragmention of policies and does not support the integrated nature of the SDGs

- **Canada**: Lack of clear institutional mechanisms, implementation plan and stakeholder engagement plan

- **Dominican Republic**: Decentralisation of the 2030 Agenda and support for municipalities is needed

- **Mexico**: Lack of completion of the 2030 Agenda implementation strategy

- **Senegal**: Capacities for data monitoring and evaluation need to be strengthened; improved data availability and quality; localisation required, including engaging with local stakeholders; translating leaving no one behind into a guiding principle in the development and implementation of public policies

- **Sudan**: Government and civil society organisations repurposing old projects under the banner of the SDGs; the need for further capacity development

- **Viet Nam**: Efforts needed by government to broaden engagement and consultation with stakeholders through online tools and social media

FINANCE

- **Bhutan**: Limited funding

- **Dominican Republic**: Funding needed to promote civil society contributions

- **Ireland**: Inadequate resources for enagement; training needed in the national statistics office and with civil society to ensure quality disaggregated data on SDG indicators

- **Malta**: Continued financial support for public education

- **Senegal**: Funding required for all actors

- **Sudan**: Limited external funding

- **Viet Nam**: Provision of grants to local governments and civil society for implementatio

STRUCTURAL FACTORS

- **Bhutan**: Deeply rooted behaviours

- **Lebanon**: Syrian crisis; lack of a comprenhensive social protection strategy

- **Mexico**: Changes in government may lead to new governments that are less supportive of civil society engagement

4.4.3 Parliamentarians

Parliamentarians play an important role in 2030 Agenda implementation. They can advocate for the priorities and concerns of the citizens they represent, and hold governments to account for progress. More countries (18) in 2018 reported on efforts by parliamentarians to support SDG implementation, beyond consultations and engagement in governance arrangements, than in 2017 (15).

Parliaments in Albania, Bhutan, Ecuador, Mali, Paraguay, Romania and Spain have adopted resolutions on the 2030 Agenda. Mali, Lebanon, Mali, Mexico, Romania, Spain and Sri Lanka have developed a parliamentary committee or working group on the 2030 Agenda, while Bhutan, Ecuador, Greece and Jamaica will address the 2030 Agenda through existing parliamentary committees. Latvia has established a parliamentary commission that includes a range of stakeholders involved in 2030 Agenda implementation. A number of VNR reports highlighted the role of parliament in monitoring progress, including Albania, Bhutan, Greece, Lebanon, Mali, Senegal and Sri Lanka. Bhutan and Malta have set out specific days or opportunities for discussion on the 2030 Agenda as a part of parliamentary work. Parliaments in Ecuador, Hungary, and Latvia have engaged in public outreach. Spain's VNR report noted studies prepared by parliament. Viet Nam noted international engagement by its parliament. Finally, Uruguay noted that the parliament engages on the 2030 Agenda through budgeting processes and the development of legislation. The main activities showcased by parliaments in the 2018 VNR reports are similar to what was reported in 2017.

A case study in good practice: Bhutan's parliament engages on the 2030 Agenda

The Bhutan National Assembly is taking steps to ensure effective oversight of the SDGs. In 2017, a resolution was adopted that incorporates SDG oversight into parliamentary work. A standing committee to engage on the SDGs was established and one day is allotted for SDG discussions per parliamentary session. The parliament aims to mobilise resources to facilitate its oversight role. The resolution also requires parliamentarians that travel for SDG-related trips to report on their visits in plenary.

Source: Excerpt adapted from Bhutan's VNR report.

4.4.4 The private sector

The role of the private sector in contributing finance and innovative solutions to development challenges has received a lot of attention in the context of 2030 Agenda discussions – both globally and in many country contexts. Yet, the extent to which VNR reports highlight private sector contributions to sustainable development remains somewhat limited. Twenty-eight (28 of 46) countries (versus 23 of 45 in 2017) provided information on specific initiatives with the private sector – beyond consultations and engagement in governance arrangements. In 2017, the main activities noted were the creation or use of forums to raise awareness and coordinate the private sector (8 countries), specific projects (7 countries), events (6 countries), company specific commitments (5 countries) and research on the role of the private sector in 2030 Agenda implementation. These activities were also highlighted in the 2018 VNR reports, alongside a wider range of contributions. Specific projects were most commonly cited (12 countries), followed by company specific commitments and participation in multi-stakeholder partnerships (10 countries each). Four (4) reports highlighted efforts beyond company specific commitments, which tend to relate more to corporate social responsibility efforts, to demonstrate how some businesses are incorporating the SDGs into their core business. Forums for awareness-raising and coordination were noted in six VNR reports. Research on the role of the private sector in 2030 Agenda implementation was highlighted in four VNR reports while another two reports noted efforts to map private sector impacts on the SDGs. The creation of prizes and competitions, notably through local United Nations Global Compact Network chapters, were noted in four VNR reports.

A case study in good practice: Responsible business in Ecuador

The Telefónica Movistar Responsible Business Plan incorporates the SDGs into a series of their programmes, using it as a fundamental element that guides their response to social, economic and environmental challenges. A number of projects are supported by the business plan. The project EduTIC-Digital Education promotes digital literacy of children, youth, teachers and adults, and encourages the responsible use of information and communication technology. It aims to reduce the digital divide and improve the quality of education through a sustained partnership with 72 organisations from the public, private and social sectors. Between 2014 and 2016, 246,645 children and adolescents, 3,111 youths, 6,170 teachers and 47,492 adults received digital education, totaling 3,450,672 hours of training. Other initiatives are being carried out to support SDG 7 on affordable and clean energy and SDG 9 on industry, innovation and infrastructure.

Source: Summary provided by CEPEI based on Ecuador's VNR report.

4.4.5 Academia and experts

Academics and experts contribute to 2030 Agenda implementation through research, project implementation and education initiatives. Reporting on the contributions from academics or experts to SDG implementation improved in 2018 over 2017. In 2017, 14 of 45 countries provided this information versus 23 of 46 countries in 2018. To the extent that VNR reporting on the role of academics and experts reflects engagement at the country level, this suggests that there is room for greater involvement by academic and expert communities in 2030 Agenda implementation.

The most common examples of academic or expert contributions noted in VNR reports related to specific projects.[131] The Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Lebanon, Mexico, Spain, United Arab Emirates, and Uruguay noted the contribution of expert analysis specifically on the 2030 Agenda. Universities in Australia, Ecuador, Greece and Latvia have begun incorporating the 2030 Agenda into curricula. VNR reports for Andorra and Greece noted events on the 2030 Agenda hosted by universities. In Andorra, a "summer school" was also held on 2030 Agenda implementation. Universities in Albania, Australia, Ecuador, Dominican Republic, and Spain have formally indicated their commitment to support 2030 Agenda implementation. Activities by national Sustainable Development Solutions Network chapters were noted for Australia and Canada. Spain's Conference of Rectors of Spanish Universities is working to adapt the 2030 Agenda within its sphere of power, namely in terms of university education and training, research, outreach and management. Canada's International Development Research Center is supporting research on the 2030 Agenda in partner countries. Finally, improving partnerships between the private sector, public sector and academia was noted to improve the quality of education in Bahrain.

4.4.6 Other stakeholders

Beyond the stakeholders noted above, a wide range of groups contribute to 2030 Agenda implementation, including youth, volunteers, trade unions and the media, *inter alia*. Half of the VNR reports (23) referred to other stakeholders in their VNR reports (versus 20 countries in 2017). Participation by youth and youth organisations is most commonly cited (ten), with governments taking steps to consult with youth on their priorities, and youth organisations in some countries carrying out advocacy related to youth priorities, as was the case in 2017. Whereas six countries noted the role of media in disseminating information on the SDGs in 2017, no countries pointed to the media in 2018. The next most commonly cited stakeholder supporting SDG implementation was

volunteers, with countries emphasising the contributions of their volunteers, and some having established policies and plans to further harness their potential contributions to the 2030 Agenda. A number of countries highlighted partnerships with international development partners. Three (3) high income countries noted their partnerships with United Nations agencies in supporting partner countries, while five countries noted specific partnerships with international and bilateral development partners. Two (2) countries referred to the role of diaspora populations, one country pointed to foundation partnerships and one country noted the role of trade unions.

4.4.7 DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS

The role of development partners in 2030 Agenda implementation is relevant for at least 30 of the 46 reporting countries in 2018 (includes low- and middle-income countries as well as high income countries that have indicated they require further support). The United Nations Secretary General's voluntary common reporting guidelines ask countries to outline their main priorities for development partner support. VNR reports for 18 countries identified priority areas for support while 20 identified the type of support and roles needed from development partners. With a few notable exceptions, VNR reports continue to not be specific enough to really inform future areas for development partner support and the establishment of partnerships, as was noted in 2017.

In terms of priority areas for support, strengthening systems to collect data and monitor SDG implementation is highlighted by five countries (ten countries highlighted this in 2017). Goal specific priorities were outlined by four countries (versus seven in 2017). Support for general plans or SDG implementation more broadly was noted by five countries. Support to raise awareness of the SDGs and produce education materials, help integrating the three dimensions of sustainable development, and assistance in making use of innovative finance were each identified by one country. In supporting country priorities, the provision of finance (official development assistance, finance from international financial institutions and South-South Cooperation) is the most common role identified by countries (12) followed by technical assistance (nine). A limited number of countries also noted the role of development partners in capacity development (four), knowledge sharing (two), technology transfer (one) and debt relief (one). Overall, these types of support are consistent with VNR reports from 2017. Fourteen (14) countries, double the number in 2017, explicitly noted that they received support to carry out their VNR, in partnership with the United Nations.[132]

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131 Included by the Bahamas, Cabo Verde, Canada, Colombia, Greece, Ireland, Jamaica, Latvia, Lebanon, Mexico, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, and United Arab Emirates.

132 Albania, Bahrain, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Guinea, Jamaica, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Mali, Mexico, Niger, Paraguay, Sri Lanka, and Uruguay.

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✅ RECOMMENDATIONS

- Support civil society to engage in 2030 Agenda implementation by creating a more enabling environment, including through institutionalised dialogue and consultation, inclusion in formal governance arrangements, finance, and capacity development.

- Integrate the 2030 Agenda into parliamentary committee work, recognising the critical role parliamentarians play as citizens' representatives and in ensuring national level accountability for progress.

- Support and develop partnerships with a variety of non-state actors, including academia and the private sector.

- Where relevant, clearly stipulate and provide details on priority areas for support from the international community, laying out the roles development partners can best play to support the acceleration of 2030 Agenda implementation.

4.5 Measurement and reporting

The Secretary General's voluntary common reporting guidelines note that it would be useful for countries to include information on how they intend to review progress at the national level, including with respect to future HLPFs. The same number of countries (31) provided this information in 2018 and 2017. In 2017, ten of the countries that did not provide this information were from Central and South America. Countries from this region accounted for seven of the 15 countries that did not report this information in 2018.

BEST PRACTICE SPOTLIGHT
Provide an account of national level reporting and accountability processes for 2030 Agenda implementation in VNR reports.

4.5.1 Data availability

The inclusion of information on data availability in VNR reports is important for understanding the current status of monitoring efforts and where additional data collection efforts are needed. In 2018, 28 countries did not provide clear information on data availability for SDG monitoring. In 2017, this figure was 31. Where countries do provide information on available indicators, they tend to make use of different methods to calculate data availability, making it difficult to provide an overall assessment of data availability for 2030 Agenda monitoring based on VNR reports. Moreover, countries do not consistently provide information on *which* indicators lack data, with some countries providing an overall percentage on data availability and others noting data gaps for specific SDGs. One exception is perhaps the VNR report for the Lao People's Democratic Republic, which included a summary of data challenges and specific information in the goal-by-goal analysis. Unlike in 2017, a number of countries also provided a full statistical annex. Canada, for example, provided the full global set of SDG indicators with actual data (previous and latest data), sources, clearly identified proxy indicators and a link to the data in English. Other reports only provided summary level information on data availability (without a statistical annex) and often with limited information on the challenges regarding data in particular sectors or for specific SDGs.

BEST PRACTICE SPOTLIGHT
Provide an analysis of data availability in the goal-by-goal analysis.

TABLE 5. DATA AVAILABILITY FOR GLOBAL SDG INDICATORS

| | COUNTRIES | |
PERCENT	2017	2018
11-20%	GUATEMALA	PARAGUAY
21-30%	AZERBAIJAN, THE MALDIVES	JAMAICA
31-40%	JAPAN, PANAMA, THE NETHERLANDS	BAHAMAS, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
41-50%	BELGIUM, ITALY, NIGERIA, PERU	BENIN, EGYPT, STATE OF PALESTINE
51-60%	DENMARK	ECUADOR, NIGER, SPAIN, URUGUAY, VIET NAM
61-70%	INDONESIA	BHUTAN, CABO VERDE, LITHUANIA, SENEGAL
71-80%	BANGLADESH	HUNGARY, MEXICO
81-90%	MALAYSIA	

Table 5 provides an overview of data availability according to country calculations for 2017 and 2018. Data availability is based on available data and proxy or partial data. The data presented does not attempt to reconcile the differences in how countries calculate data availability. Rather the table provides an indication of where countries situate themselves in terms of data availability, and further demonstrates the need for countries – regardless of their income level – to strengthen data availability for SDG monitoring. Comparing findings from 2017 with 2018, it appears that, overall, countries noted greater data availability.

4.5.2 Disaggregated data

As noted in the section on leaving no one behind, information on disaggregated data is not well reported in the VNR reports for 2017 or 2018. Yet, this information is important for establishing baselines and informing evidence-based approaches to policy-making and programming. For the 15 countries that provided information on disaggregated data, 12 noted that there is a need to improve disaggregated data in general terms. Countries were limited in terms of providing information on specific gaps in disaggregated data with references made only to gender (three), region (one), age (oney), disability (two) and migration status (one).

4.5.3 Efforts to improve data availability

Given that most countries are facing challenges with respect to monitoring the full global SDG indicator set, the review examines efforts to improve data availability. A majority of countries (31) reported on efforts to improve data availability. In 2017, countries focussed on capacity development and technical assistance (18), building new data sets (12), improved coordination (eight), resource mobilisation (six), improved data dissemination (four) and use of technology (three). These same themes were highlighted by countries reporting in 2018 as shown in Figure 19. In addition, 11 countries noted existing or planned strategies for improving statistical capacity. Some countries will improve their legal and policy environment (three) and raise awareness of data challenges and priorities (three). Four (4) countries noted improved engagement with experts, the private sector or civil society and international development partners to improve data availability and analysis. Three (3) countries made a general commitment to improve statistical capacity but did not provide details on how.[133]

FIGURE 19. EFFORTS TO IMPROVE DATA AVAILABILITY

Build new datasets — 10
Capacity development and techical assistance — 14
Coordination — 9
General commitment to strengthen — 3
Improved awareness of data challenges and priorities — 3
Improved data dissemination — 6
Improved engagement with non-government report actors — 4
Improve legal policy environment — 3
Resource mobilisation — 7
Statistical plan adopted/being developed — 11
Use of technology — 2

0   3   6   9   12   15
Activity

🇦🇲 **A case study in good practice: Adoption of a human rights-based approach to data in Armenia**

The VNR report for Armenia highlights the use of a human rights-based approach to data. For Armenia, this means collecting data for SDG indicators on a sustainable basis and with appropriate levels of disaggregation, maintained through a participatory and consultative approach. The VNR report sets out a number of actions needed to ensure effective "data engagement" at the municipal level, including establishing necessary legal institutional arrangements, preparing simple indicators rooted in the SDG indicators that are user friendly and not too difficult to collect at the community level. The government recognises that it is important to introduce the concept of a human rights-based approach to data at the community level drawing on internationally agreed principles for statistics, upholding human rights and ensuring efforts are based on the principles of participation, transparency, privacy and accountability.

Source: Excerpt adapted from Armenia's VNR report.

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133 Bahamas noted that it would establish a national statistical system working with partners. Canada highlighted the creation of center to improve the availability of disaggregated data. Paraguay noted regional cooperation efforts.

4.5.4 National reporting on 2030 Agenda implementation

In addition to reporting at the HLPF, the 2030 Agenda recognises the importance of country-driven follow-up and review at the national and sub-national levels. Countries are also invited to report on provisions for national level reporting in the Secretary General's voluntary common reporting guidelines.

In 2017, 31 countries provided information on national reporting provisions. In 2018, 30 countries did the same. In 2017 and 2018, no country referred to regional accountability mechanisms or peer learning. While only one country, Japan, noted when it would submit a follow-up report to the HLPF, Ireland, Spain and Romania presented timetables for presentation of VNR reports to the HLPF. Switzerland plans to report every four years to the HLPF.

> **BEST PRACTICE SPOTLIGHT**
> **Link accountability for progress on 2030 Agenda implementation to regular, planned parliamentary reviews.**

> **A case study in good practice: Ireland's transparent commitment to report**
>
> Ireland's VNR report includes a time table for SDG reporting. It includes planned national reports on a biennial basis from 2018-30. The government also plans to submit VNRs to the HLPF in 2018, 2022, 2026 and 2030. Over 2018-30, the country plans to produce a total of 7 national reports and 4 VNR reports.
>
> Source: Except adapted from Ireland's VNR report.

Similar to 2017, the 2018 VNR reports did not refer to reporting by non-state actors on their contributions to 2030 Agenda implementation. However, three countries noted that national level reporting would occur in consultation with non-state actors. Fourteen (14) countries noted regular reporting, seven of which will report annually (one – Benin – annually plus more frequently) and two of which will report biennially. Whereas five countries noted the use of dashboards or web portals in 2017, 11 countries noted this approach in 2018, often in conjunction with other forms of reporting. Eight (8) countries plan to make use of existing monitoring and evaluation systems to assess progress on the 2030 Agenda. Two (2) countries highlighted statistical reports (one annually, one biennially). Five (5) countries note responsibility for reporting by their 2030 Agenda committee or council (or its associated working groups), two countries highlight a responsible department, and one country pointed to the Prime Minister's Office. Three (3) countries – Jamaica, Paraguay and Sri Lanka – noted the role of their supreme audit institutions. Two (2) countries noted parliamentary discussions on progress while three countries highlighted reporting to cabinet or the parliament.

> **A case study in good practice: Recognising the role of supreme audit institutions in supporting 2030 Agenda implementation and accountability**
>
> VNR reports for **Jamaica**, **Paraguay** and **Sri Lanka** highlighted contributions by supreme audit institutions to 2030 Agenda implementation. Jamaica's Auditor General's Department is taking part in the International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions' (INTOSAI) initiative to support contributions by supreme audit institutions to 2030 Agenda implementation. The initiative includes carrying out audits and reviews in four capacities, including 1) assessing national government preparedness for implementation, 2) carrying out performance audits; 3) contributing to SDG 16 in terms of supporting effective, accountable and transparent institutions; and 4) identifying ways in which supreme audit institutions can serve as models for transparency and accountability. Jamaica's VNR report noted that an audit on SDG preparedness was underway.
>
> Other countries reporting in 2018 whose supreme audit institutions have produced a report as part of INTOSAI's initiatives on the 2030 Agenda include Canada, Ecuador, Poland, the State of Palestine and Sudan. However, VNR reports for these countries do not mention the work of their supreme audit institutions.
>
> Supreme audit institutions are allies in safeguarding financing for sustainable development according to Paraguay's VNR report. The country's supreme audit institution is mandated to examine progress made by the government on the achievement of the SDGs. Audits are currently being conducted in order to assess preparedness for 2030 Agenda implementation, and specifically, for SDG 2 on zero hunger, SDG 4 on quality education, and SDG 5 on gender equality. Further audits are planned.
>
> Sri Lanka's VNR report noted that the country's Auditor General's Department plans to incorporate the SDGs into the government's auditing process. The Auditor General's Department sent a questionnaire to public agencies to inquire about their SDG involvement.
>
> Source: Excerpts adapted from VNR reports for Jamaica, Paraguay and Sri Lanka.

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A number of countries reporting to the HLPF in 2018 are reporting for the second time. These include Benin, Colombia, Egypt, Mexico, Qatar, Switzerland, Togo and Uruguay. The Secretary General's voluntary common reporting guidelines note that it is desirable for countries to present progress made since their last VNR. As shown in the best practice case study below, a number of countries included a system to indicate the status of progress on 2030 Agenda implementation, two of which include second time reporting countries, namely Egypt and Switzerland. The majority of countries, however, do not include an assessment of their progress since their last VNR. This includes Benin, Colombia, Mexico, Qatar, Togo and Uruguay. This might be explained, in part, by the fact that all countries but Mexico focussed largely on the HLPF-specific theme goals, rather than all the goals, having reported on different SDGs specific to the HLPF in previous years.

A case study in good practice: Reporting on progress through the VNR report

A number of the VNR reports included a system for showcasing progress on available SDG indicators. **Egypt** and the **Lao People's Democratic Republic** included a traffic light system to indicate progress on available indicators. **Latvia's** statistical annex includes a system to assess trends. A score of "1" was allotted to indicators for which the trend fully complies with the SDG or is in line with progress towards the national development plan and the country's national SDG targets. A score of "0" indicates that there has been insignificant change, positive or negative. A score of "-1" indicates a negative trend.

In the goal-by-goal analysis of **Switzerland's** VNR report, the presentation of targets included a symbol to indicate the direction in which the country would like a particular indicator to move, a symbol indicating observed trends and a third symbol indicating whether the observed trend is positive, negative, unchanged or has no verdict.

Source: Excerpt adapted from the VNR reports for Egypt, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, and Switzerland.

✅ RECOMMENDATIONS

- Report on data availability, including disaggregated data, and country efforts to improve data availability - given the importance of data for SDG monitoring and accountability, as well as leaving no one behind.

- Link reviews of progress for 2030 Agenda implementation to parliamentary oversight mechanisms in order to ensure accountability at the national level.

- Spell out plans to review progress at the national level and be accountable to citizens for progress on the 2030 Agenda beyond reporting to the HLPF. This should include consulting with non-state actors and articulating plans for future HLPF reporting. These elements are important for ensuring accountability for progress on the 2030 Agenda, identifying gaps in implementation, allowing for course correction and ensuring transparency in reporting processes.

- Include an assessment of progress on 2030 Agenda implementation in VNR reports to the HLPF, particularly with reference to the status of implementation in previously submitted VNR reports.

5.0 Assessment of VNR Reports against the United Nations Secretary General's Voluntary Common Reporting Guidelines

Photo: © World Vision, Jim Wungramyao Kasom- India

Chapter Summary

Similar to 2017, many of the VNR reports are not structured according to the outline in the guidelines though they capture most elements. This can hinder comparison of shared challenges and good practices.

The majority of countries include most elements of the voluntary common reporting guidelines in their VNR reports. All elements of the guidelines were included by at least 70% of reporting countries, with the exceptions of leaving no one behind, structural issues and the annexes.

Despite these missing elements, VNR reports still tend to be very long and in some cases unnecessarily detailed. Repetition was identified as a key issue in the 2017 review of VNR reports, however this was less of an issue for the 2018 VNR reports.

The United Nations Secretary-General proposed a set of voluntary common reporting guidelines to help countries frame their VNR reports to the HLPF. The guidelines, which were updated in December 2017, are voluntary; countries ultimately decide how to present their findings. The guidelines for the 2018 HPF emphasize the use of the structure outlined by the Secretary General to promote consistency and comparability. They include the following elements listed below. Changes from the previous guidelines are also noted. The order for the chapters also changed. This is denoted below by an asterisk ("*"). All the VNR reports presented in 2018, were reviewed against the guidelines to identify which of the suggested components are being addressed by countries in their VNR reports.

TABLE 6. COMPARISON OF UPDATED AND PREVIOUS SECRETARY GENERAL VOLUNTARY COMMON REPORTING GUIDELINES

PREVIOUS	2017 UPDATE FOR THE 2018 HLPF
Opening statement	
An opening statement by the Head of State or Government, a Minister or other high-ranking Government official.	An opening statement by the Head of State or Government, a Minister or other high-ranking Government official.
Summary becomes highlights	
A summary highlighting good practice, lessons learned, key challenges and support needed as outlined in the previous guidelines.	In addition to the previous elements, the highlights serves as a one-to-two page synthesis that should provide an overview of the review process, status of SDG progress and how the government is responding to the integrated and indivisible nature of the 2030 Agenda and working to leave no one behind.
Introduction	
The introduction set the context and objectives for the review with a discussion of national priorities and critical challenges.	An introduction that sets the context and objectives for the review, outlines the review cycle and how existing national reports were used. The policy architecture for implementation and policy tools to support integration of the three dimensions, as well as linkages to relevant international agreements could also be mentioned.
Methodology and process for preparation of the review	
Presentation of the methodology for the review, outlining the process for preparation of the national review.	No change: Presentation of the methodology for the review, outlining the process for preparation of the national review.
Policy and enabling environment – Creating ownership	
Creating ownership of the SDGs, outlining efforts towards all stakeholders to inform them on and involve them in the SDGs. Could include how the SDGs will be reviewed at the national level.	Creating ownership of the SDGs, outlining efforts towards all stakeholders to inform them on and involve them in the SDGs. Could address how specific groups have been engaged.
Policy and enabling environment – Incorporation of the SDGs in national framework	
Incorporation of the SDGs in national framework, in terms of the critical initiatives countries undertook to adapt the SDGs and targets to its national circumstances, and to advance their implementation. Should include challenges in implementation and refer to efforts taken by other stakeholders.	No change: Incorporation of the SDGs in national framework, in terms of the critical initiatives countries undertook to adapt the SDGs and targets to its national circumstances, and to advance their implementation. Should include challenges in implementation, and their cause, and refer to efforts taken by other stakeholders.

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PREVIOUS	2017 UPDATE FOR THE 2018 HLPF
Policy and enabling environment – Integration of the three dimensions	
Integration of the three dimensions though a discussion of how the three dimensions of sustainable development are being integrated and how sustainable development policies are being designed and implemented to reflect such integration. Could include analysis of how the principles of the 2030 Agenda are being mainstreamed.	Integration of the three dimensions though a discussion of how the three dimensions of sustainable development are being integrated and how sustainable development policies are being designed and implemented to reflect such integration. Could include analysis related to the HLPF theme.
Policy and enabling environment – Thematic analysis becomes leaving no one behind*	
Thematic analysis of progress and initiatives related to the HLPF's thematic focus for the year.	Assessment of how the principle of leaving no one behind is mainstreamed in implementation. Includes how vulnerable groups have been identified, efforts to address their needs, and particular attention to women and girls.
Policy and enabling environment – Institutional mechanisms	
Institutional mechanisms, described in terms of how the country has adapted its institutional framework in order to implement the 2030 Agenda. Would be useful to include how the country plans to review progress.	Institutional mechanisms, described in terms of how the country has adapted its institutional framework in order to implement the 2030 Agenda. Would be useful to include how the country plans to review progress and can note where support is provided by United Nations Country Teams in the preparation of national SDG reports.
Policy and enabling environment – Structural issues*	
Not included in previous guidelines.	Relevant structural issues or barriers, including external constraints that hinder progress. Transformative approaches to addressing these challenges can be highlighted.
Goals and targets* (became separate from the policy and enabling environment heading)	
A brief analysis of progress on all goals and targets, including whether a baseline has been defined. Discussion can also include trends, successes, challenges, emerging issues, lessons learned and actions to address gaps and challenges.	A brief analysis of progress on all goals and targets, including whether a baseline has been defined. Discussion can also include trends, successes, challenges, emerging issues, lessons learned and actions to address gaps and challenges. Countries completing a subsequent VNR are encouraged to describe progress since the previous review.

PREVIOUS	2017 UPDATE FOR THE 2018 HLPF
Means of implementation (MOI)	
Presentation of the means of implementation including how MOI are mobilised, what difficulties this process faces, and what additional resources are needed.	Presentation of the means of implementation, including how MOI are mobilised, what difficulties this process faces, and what additional resources are needed. Can include reference to how financial systems and resource allocation support implementation. Can also include reference to the private sector, the role of technology, concrete capacity development and data needs and the role of multi-stakeholder partnerships.
Next steps	
An outline of next steps the country is taking or planning to take to enhance the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.	An outline of next steps the country is taking or planning to take to enhance the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Can also outline how implementation will be reviewed at national and sub-national levels.
Conclusion	
A conclusion that provides a summary of the analysis, findings and policy implications. Lessons learned from the VNR could be highlighted.	No change: A conclusion that provides a summary of the analysis, findings and policy implications. Lessons learned from the VNR could be highlighted.
Statistical annex becomes annexes	
A statistical annex with data, using the global SDG indicators as a starting point and adding priority national/regional indicators and identifying gaps.	Annexes can include an annex with data, using the global SDG indicators as a starting point and adding priority national/regional indicators and identifying gaps. Additional annexes can showcase best practice or comments from stakeholders.

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5.1 Overall assessment of use of the guidelines

As shown in Figure 20, most countries include most elements of the guidelines in their VNR report, with notable exceptions being leaving no one behind, structural issues and the annexes. While some countries organised their VNR reports according to the guidelines, many did not. In addition, the VNR reports show an absence of details on best practices, lessons learned, and areas in which countries would like to learn from others, a finding consistent with the review of 2017 VNR reports. More countries could also identify priorities for development partner support. The provision of such information generates understanding of country needs, provides a basis on which to hold stakeholders accountable for their efforts to support 2030 Agenda implementation and assists in the identification of the best entry points for support. This is a gap in existing VNR reports that undermines the HLPF process.

Despite these missing elements, VNR reports still tend to be very long and in some cases unnecessarily detailed. Repetition was identified as a key issue in the 2017 review of VNR reports, however this was less of an issue for the 2018 VNR reports.

Photo: © World Vision, Crislyn Felisilda - Philippines

FIGURE 20. THE EXTENT TO WHICH COUNTRIES INCORPORATE ELEMENTS OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL'S VOLUNTARY COMMON REPORTING GUIDELINES, 2018, 2017 AND 2016

- 🟢 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

2018	OPENING STATEMENT	HIGHLIGHTS	INTRODUCTION	METHODOLOGY FOR REVIEW	CREATING OWNERSHIP	INCORPORATION IN NATIONAL FRAMEWORKS	INTEGRATION OF THREE DIMENSIONS	LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND	INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS	STRUCTURAL ISSUES	GOALS AND TARGETS	MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION	NEXT STEPS	CONCLUSION	ANNEXES
Albania	🟢	🟢	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟡	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟡
Andorra	🟡	🔴	🟡	🟢	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟢
Armenia	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟡	🟢	🟢	🔴	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢
Australia	🟢	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟢	🔴	🟢	🟢	🟢	🔴	🟢	🟡	🟢	🔴	🔴
Bahamas	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟡	🟢	🟢	🔴	🟢	🟡	🟢	🟢	🔴
Bahrain	🔴	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🔴	🔴	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢
Benin	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢
Bhutan	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢
Cabo Verde	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢
Canada	🟢	🟡	🟢	🔴	🔴	🟢	🔴	🟢	🟢	🔴	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢
Colombia	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟡	🟢	🔴	🟢	🟢	🔴	🟢	🟢	🔴	🟢	🟢
Dominican Republic	🟢	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟡	🟢	🔴	🟡	🟢	🔴	🟢	🟡	🟢	🔴	🔴
Ecuador	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟢	🔴	🟡	🔴	🔴	🟡	🔴	🟢	🟢	🟡	🟡	🟡
Egypt	🟡	🔴	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🔴	🟢	🟢
Greece	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟡	🟢	🟢	🔴	🟢
Guinea	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟡	🟢	🟡	🟢	🟡	🟢
Hungary	🔴	🔴	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟡	🟢	🔴	🟢	🔴	🔴	🔴	🔴
Ireland	🟢	🔴	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🔴	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢
Jamaica	🟢	🟢	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟡	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟡	🟢	🟢	🔴	🟡	🔴
Kiribati	🔴	🔴	🔴	🟢	🟢	🟡	🔴	🔴	🟢	🔴	🟡	🔴	🔴	🔴	🔴
Lao People's Democratic Republic	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢
Latvia	🟢	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🔴	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢
Lebanon	🔴	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🔴	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🔴

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2018

Country	OPENING STATEMENT	HIGHLIGHTS	INTRODUCTION	METHODOLOGY FOR REVIEW	CREATING OWNERSHIP	INCORPORATION IN NATIONAL FRAMEWORKS	INTEGRATION OF THREE DIMENSIONS	LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND	INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS	STRUCTURAL ISSUES	GOALS AND TARGETS	MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION	NEXT STEPS	CONCLUSION	ANNEXES
Lithuania															
Mali															
Malta															
Mexico															
Namibia															
Niger															
Paraguay															
Poland															
Qatar															
Romania															
Saudi Arabia															
Senegal															
Singapore															
Slovakia															
Spain															
Sri Lanka															
State of Palestine															
Sudan															
Switzerland															
Togo															
United Arab Emirates															
Uruguay															
Viet Nam															
Percentage of countries meeting or partially meeting the guideline	82.6	71.7	**95.7**	**93.5**	80.4	**95.7**	71.7	63	**95.7**	67.4	**91.3**	76.1	73.9	80.4	60.9
Direction of change over previous year	▲	▼	▼	▲	▲	▼	▲	▲ [134]	▲	— [135]	▼ [136]	▲	▼	▲	▲

134 Over 2016.

135 Not included in previous VNR voluntary common reporting guidelines.

136 However, reporting improved overall as most countries looked at all 17 SDGs rather than a sub-set of them as was the case in 2017.

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2017	STATEMENT BY HOSG	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	INTRODUCTION	METHODOLOGY FOR REVIEW	CREATING OWNERSHIP	INCORPORATION IN NATIONAL FRAMEWORKS	INTEGRATION OF THREE DIMENSIONS	THEME CHAPTER: ERADICATING POVERTY AND PROMOTING PROSPERITY	INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS	STRUCTURAL ISSUES	GOALS AND TARGETS	MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION	NEXT STEPS	CONCLUSION	STATISTICAL ANNEX
Afghanistan	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	N/A	🟡	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟡
Argentina	🟢	🟡	🟡	🟢	🟡	🟢	🟡	🟢	🟡	N/A	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	🔴
Aruba	🟢	🟢	🟡	🔴	🟢	🟢	🔴	🔴	🟢	N/A	🟡	🔴	🔴	🔴	🔴
Azerbaijan	🔴	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟡	🟢	🟢	N/A	🟡	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟢
Bangladesh	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	N/A	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢
Belgium	🟢	🔴	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟡	🔴	🟢	N/A	🟢	🔴	🔴	🟢	🟢
Belize	🔴	🟢	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟡	N/A	🟡	🟢	🟢	🔴	🟢
Benin	🟢	🟡	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟡	🟢	N/A	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟡	🟢
Botswana	🔴	🟢	🟢	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟡	🟢	🟢	N/A	🟡	🔴	🔴	🟢	🟢
Brazil	🟢	🟡	🟡	🔴	🟢	🟡	🔴	🟢	🟡	N/A	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟡	🟢
Chile	🔴	🟢	🟡	🔴	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	N/A	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢
Costa Rica	🟢	🔴	🟡	🔴	🟢	🟢	🔴	🟢	🟢	N/A	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟢	🔴
Curaçao	🟢	🟢	🟡	🔴	🟢	🟢	🔴	🟢	🟢	N/A	🟢	🔴	🔴	🟢	🟢
Cyprus	🔴	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🔴	🟢	N/A	🟢	🟢	🟡	🟢	🟢
Czech Republic	🟢	🟢	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟢	🟡	🟢	🟡	N/A	🟡	🟢	🟢	🔴	🟢
Denmark	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🔴	🟢	N/A	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢
El Salvador	🟢	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟡	N/A	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢
Ethiopia	🔴	🔴	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	N/A	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢
Guatemala	🔴	🟢	🟢	🔴	🟡	🟢	🟡	🟢	🟢	N/A	🟡	🔴	🔴	🟡	🟢
Honduras	🟢	🟢	🟢	🔴	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	N/A	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🔴
India	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟢	🔴	🟡	🔴	🔴	🟢	N/A	🟡	🔴	🟢	🔴	🟢
Indonesia	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟡	🟢	🟢	N/A	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🔴
Italy	🟡	🔴	🟡	🔴	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	N/A	🔴	🔴	🔴	🔴	🟢
Japan	🔴	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🔴	🟢	N/A	🟢	🔴	🟢	🔴	🔴
Jordan	🟢	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🔴	🟢	🟡	N/A	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟢	🔴
Kenya	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🔴	🟢	N/A	🟢	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟢
Luxembourg	🟢	🔴	🟡	🔴	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟡	N/A	🟢	🟡	🟡	🟢	🔴
Malaysia	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟡	🟢	🟢	🔴	🟢	🟢	N/A	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟡	🟡
Maldives	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟡	🟢	🟢	N/A	🟢	🟢	🔴	🟢	🟡
Monaco	🟢	🔴	🟡	🟡	🟡	🔴	🔴	🟢	🟡	N/A	🟢	🟡	🟡	🟢	🔴

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2017	STATEMENT BY HOSG	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	INTRODUCTION	METHODOLOGY FOR REVIEW	CREATING OWNERSHIP	INCORPORATION IN NATIONAL FRAMEWORKS	INTEGRATION OF THREE DIMENSIONS	THEME CHAPTER: ERADICATING POVERTY AND PROMOTING PROSPERITY	INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS	STRUCTURAL ISSUES	GOALS AND TARGETS	MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION	NEXT STEPS	CONCLUSION	STATISTICAL ANNEX
Nepal	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🔴	🔴	🟢	N/A	🟡	🟢	🟢	🔴	🔴
Nigeria	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	N/A	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢
Panama	🟢	🟢	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	N/A	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢
Perú	🟢	🟢	🔴	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟡	🟡	🟢	N/A	🟢	🔴	🟢	🟢	🟢
Portugal	🔴	🟢	🟡	🟡	🔴	🟡	🔴	🔴	🟢	N/A	🟢	🔴	🔴	🔴	🟢
Qatar	🟢	🟡	🟡	🔴	🟡	🟢	🔴	🟡	🟢	N/A	🟡	🔴	🟡	🟢	🟢
Slovenia	🟢	🔴	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	N/A	🟢	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟢
St. Maarten	🟢	🟢	🟡	🔴	🟢	🟢	🔴	🔴	🟢	N/A	🟡	🔴	🔴	🔴	🔴
Sweden	🔴	🟢	🟢	🟡	🔴	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟢	N/A	🟢	🔴	🟢	🟢	🟢
Tajikistan	🔴	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟡	🟢	🔴	🟡	🟢	N/A	🔴	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟡
Thailand	🔴	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🔴	N/A	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢
The Netherlands	🟢	🟢	🟡	🔴	🟢	🟢	🔴	🔴	🟢	N/A	🟢	🔴	🔴	🔴	🔴
Togo	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	N/A	🟡	🔴	🟡	🟢	🔴
Uruguay	🟡	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟡	🟢	🔴	🔴	🟢	N/A	🟡	🔴	🔴	🟢	🟢
Zimbabwe	🔴	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	N/A	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟡
Percentage of countries meeting or partially meeting the guideline	71.1	82.2	**100**	71.1	**93.3**	**97.8**	66.7	_[137]	86.7	_[138]	**95.6**	64.4	75.6	75.6	46.7*
Direction of change over previous year	▲	▼	▲	▼	▲	▲	▲	–	▲	–	▲	▲	▼	▲	▼

137 Not included in the 2016 voluntary common reporting guidelines.

138 Not included in the 2016 voluntary common reporting guidelines.

Progressing national SDGs implementation

2016	STATEMENT BY HOSG	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	INTRODUCTION	METHODOLOGY FOR REVIEW	CREATING OWNERSHIP	INCORPORATION IN NATIONAL FRAMEWORKS	INTEGRATION OF THREE DIMENSIONS	THEME CHAPTER: ENSURING THAT NO ONE IS LEFT BEHIND	INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS	STRUCTURAL ISSUES	GOALS AND TARGETS	MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION	NEXT STEPS	CONCLUSION	STATISTICAL ANNEX
China	red	green	red	red	red	red	red	red	red	N/A	red	red	red	red	red
Egypt	red	green	green	green	red	yellow	yellow	green	green	N/A	green	green	green	green	yellow
Estonia	red	green	green	green	green	green	green	yellow	red	N/A	green	green	green	green	green
Finland	green	green	green	green	green	green	green	green	green	N/A	red	red	yellow	green	yellow
France	red	green	green	yellow	green	green	green	green	red	N/A	green	green	green	green	red
Georgia	green	green	green	green	green	green	green	green	green	N/A	green	yellow	green	green	green
Germany	red	green	green	green	green	green	green	green	red	N/A	red	green	green	green	green
Montenegro	red	green	green	yellow	yellow	green	green	green	green	N/A	red	green	green	green	green
Norway	red	green	green	green	green	green	green	green	green	N/A	red	green	yellow	green	green
Philippines	red	green	green	green	green	green	red	red	green	N/A	yellow	green	green	green	yellow
Republic of Korea	red	green	green	green	green	green	yellow	green	green	N/A	yellow	green	green	green	yellow
Samoa	red	red	green	yellow	red	green	red	red	red	N/A	yellow	red	red	red	red
Sierra Leone	red	green	green	green	green	green	red	red	green	N/A	red	red	green	green	green
Switzerland	green	green	green	green	green	green	green	green	green	N/A	green	green	green	green	green
Turkey	red	green	green	yellow	yellow	green	green	red	yellow	N/A	red	red	red	green	yellow
Uganda	green	green	green	green	green	green	yellow	yellow	green	N/A	red	green	green	green	green
Percentage of countries meeting or partially meeting the guideline	25	**93.8**	**93.8**	**93.8**	68.8	87.5	56.3	43.8	75	-[139]	62.5	43.8	81.3	75	62.5

✔ RECOMMENDATIONS

• Follow, as much as possible, the guidelines as proposed by the Secretary General to ensure that all elements of SDG implementation are captured, and facilitate comparison of shared challenges, good practices and lessons learned.

139 Not included in the 2016 voluntary common reporting guidelines.

5.2 Detailed assessment of the use of the guidelines

5.2.1 Statement by head of government

Thirty-eight (38) countries included an opening statement in 2018, 32 of which were signed by the head of government or another government official. This shows continued growth in terms of VNR reports including such a statement since 2016 [140] with just over 82% of countries including this element in 2018 versus 32 of 45 (or 71%) countries in 2017, and four of the 16 (or 25%) examined countries in 2016. The high number of reports including opening statements bodes well as an indication of political support for the 2030 Agenda.

✅ Include a statement from a head of state to demonstrate commitment and give profile to the agenda.

5.2.2 Highlights

The majority of reports (33 of 46 or 71%) included a highlights section or captured the main elements of the highlights section in the report. This represents a decrease in the proportion of reports that included this section or something similar relative to 2017, when 37 countries included an executive summary (82%). In 2016, 15 of 16 examined VNR reports included an executive summary (93.75%). Highlights should be included in VNR reports to ensure accessibility and dissemination of key findings.

✅ Include highlights as a tool to provide a snapshot of context, the review, integration of the three dimensions, efforts to leave no one behind, best practice, challenges and lessons learned.

5.2.3 Introduction

In 2018 all countries, with the exception of Kiribati and Sudan who only submitted main messages, included an introduction or the main elements of the introduction. All 45 countries examined in 2017 followed a similar approach. In 2016, only one country – China – did not meet this requirement.

✅ Include an introduction to set the scene and outline components of the VNR report that avoids repetition of the opening statement and executive summary.

5.2.4 Methodology for review

Reporting on the methodology for the review improved in 2018, with 38 countries including this component and another four countries following the guidelines to some extent. Canada, Slovakia and Switzerland (three countries) did not provide information on the

methodology for the review in 2018, versus 13 countries in 2017. One country did not include this information in 2016. For those that included information on the methodology, information was generally detailed on the VNR process and stakeholder engagement. VNR reports included information on leadership, the drafting process, data sources, methodology, and engagement mechanisms.

✅ Continue to include the methodology for the VNR, with sufficient details that clearly articulate how the drafting process occurred, timing, how stakeholders were engaged, and lessons learned. This will provide greater clarity on what was done, and how other member states can draw from the experience of different countries.

5.2.5 Creating ownership

More countries did not include information on creating ownership in 2018 (nine) than in 2017 (three). The proportion of countries reporting on their efforts to raise awareness and create ownership over the 2030 Agenda was approximately 80%, with 11 of the 36 countries that included this component only meeting the guideline to some extent. In 2017, 42 (93%) countries reported on creating ownership versus 11 of 16 (69%) in 2016. VNR reports included information on lessons, key initiatives and successes in creating ownership as was the case in 2017.

✅ Continue to provide information on efforts to raise awareness and foster ownership, in particular key initiatives, successes and lessons learned in this process.

5.2.6 Incorporation of SDGs in national frameworks

Australia and Singapore were the only countries that did not include information on how the SDGs have been incorporated into national frameworks in 2018. In 2017, Monaco was the only country that did not report this information (versus two countries in 2016 – China and France). Information was included with varying degrees of detail; however, most countries are adhering to this element of the guidelines.

✅ Continue to provide information on efforts to incorporate the SDGs into national frameworks, in particular key initiatives and successes and lessons learned in this process.

140 Throughout the analysis, reference to the 2016 report refers to Cutter, 2016.

5.2.7 Integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development

A larger proportion of countries reported on how they integrate the three dimensions of sustainable development in the 2018 reports (33 or 72%) compared to 2017 (30 or 66.7%) and 2016 (9 or 56%). That said, only 24 of the 33 countries met this component as instructed in the guidelines, suggesting that countries require further guidance on this section. In this vein, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs' 2019 edition of the Handbook for the Preparation of Voluntary National Reviews provides some useful guidance. It notes that VNRs should clearly state the inter-linkages between SDGs in terms of synergies and trade-offs or conflict. VNR reports should also refer to institutional arrangements to promote integration in this context. The Handbook, which includes a range of questions to guide member states for all components of VNR reporting, showcases questions on integration that member states can use to analyse and report on this aspect of implementation. The Handbook welcomes the use of simple examples to illustrate integration.

✅ Make use of the guidance provided by the Handbook for the Preparation of Voluntary National Reviews to better assess and report on integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development in VNR reports.

5.2.8 Leaving no one behind

As noted above, reporting on leaving no one behind could be improved, with just under 61% (28 of 46 countries) addressing this component fully or somewhat in their VNR reports. In previous years, leaving no one behind was part of the thematic analysis for 2016, but not in 2017 when the HLPF theme looked at eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world. In 2016, seven out of 16 countries reported on leaving no one behind as part of the thematic analysis.

✅ Report on efforts to leave no one behind as instructed by the voluntary common reporting guidelines, including information on who is being left behind, data, efforts, and results.

5.2.9 Institutional mechanisms

Sudan and Singapore were the only countries that did not report on institutional mechanisms in 2018, though 11 countries only fulfilled this component to some extent. In 2017, all countries reported on institutional mechanism with the majority (39 of 45) fully meeting instructions as per the guidelines. Four (4) countries did not include this component in 2016. Generally speaking, countries included information on governance mechanisms, key institutions supporting 2030 Agenda implementation and coordination mechanisms.

✅ Continue to provide information on institutional mechanisms for 2030 Agenda implementation, including governance arrangements.

5.2.10 Structural issues

Structural issues, a new component in the 2018 guidelines, were captured by 31 (67%) of the VNR reports for 2018. In this context, only 22 reports fully met the component as instructed by the guidelines. Generally speaking, information on structural issues tended to be incorporated throughout VNR reports rather than explicitly stated, with information on how challenges and barriers are being addressed.

✅ Report on structural issues that hinder progress on 2030 Agenda implementation and approaches to addressing such issues.

5.2.11 Goals and targets

The analysis of goals and targets was met or partially met by all countries in 2018 with the exception of Bahrain, Kiribati, Slovakia, and Sudan. All countries but two met or partially met this component in 2017. There was improvement in 2018 overall however, as the majority of countries reported on all goals rather than a sub-set of the goals, as was the case in 2017. Only two of eight countries – Egypt and Switzerland – that submitted a subsequent report to the HLPF included information on trends.

As noted above, reporting on best practice, lessons learned and where countries would like to learn from others could be improved. While some countries have included this information in the goal-by-goal analysis, more countries could do so alongside the detailed account of policies, programmes and trends. The removal of the thematic analysis chapter in the 2018 voluntary common reporting guidelines appears to have helped with reducing repetition, an issue noted in the 2017 review of VNR reports.

✅ Continue to report on all SDGs with specific attention to trends, gaps, best practice, and lessons learned.

✅ Report on progress between first and subsequent VNRs, providing an indication of trends over time.

5.2.12 Means of implementation

More countries provided information on the means of implementation in 2018 (76% or 35 countries) than in 2017 (29 of 45 countries, or 64%). However, as was the case in 2017, around half of the reporting countries did not follow the instructions as per the guidelines (16 of 29 in 2017). In 2016, seven of 16 (or 44%) countries reported on the means of implementation, with six reporting according to the guidelines. While reporting on the means of implementation improved overall for international public finance, trade, technology and systemic issues, countries did less well in terms of reporting on domestic resources, allocations and financial systems to support 2030 Agenda implementation, as requested in the revised voluntary common reporting guidelines.

✅ Report on the means of implementation as instructed in the guidelines, including domestic finance, resource allocation, budgeting, international public finance, trade, capacity development, technology and partnerships.

5.2.13 Next steps

The same number of countries provided information on next steps in 2018 as in 2017 – 34. Thirteen (13) of 16 countries provided this information in 2016. Similar to 2017, next steps are often presented in the conclusion. While some next steps tended to be vague – e.g. further localisation of the agenda – some countries provided enough detail to allow for an assessment of progress on next steps in subsequent VNR reports. Detailed explanations of next steps are important for articulating future activities and for supporting accountability in SDG implementation. This information enables stakeholders to follow-up on whether countries have carried out the actions identified in their VNR reports.

✅ Provide a detailed assessment of the forward-looking agenda, outlining where the country needs to go and the steps to get there, based on gaps and lessons learned to date. This should include next steps in terms of follow-up and review with concrete commitments to be fulfilled by states, strengthening the VNR process and clarifying what stakeholders can expect in the years following VNR reporting at the HLPF.

3.2.14 Conclusion

The majority of countries (37) prepared a conclusion as part of their VNR report. In 2017, 34 countries prepared a conclusion whereas 12 of 16 countries did the same in 2016. A number of conclusions, in addition to highlighting the main elements of the report, included reference to lessons learned through the VNR or the value of the VNR process.

✅ Include lessons learned from the VNR process in the conclusion to showcase the value of the VNR process to national and international stakeholders and how it can be improved next time as a result of the lessons learned.

5.2.15 Annexes

Over half of the countries reporting in 2018, or 28, included an annex in their VNR report; however only 20 countries met this component as instructed by the guidelines. In 2017, only 21 of 45 countries included a statistical annex. In 2016, ten of 16 countries did the same. There has been an improvement in the provision of statistical annexes from 2017 to 2018. Only a handful of countries provided the full global SDG indicator dataset; however a number of countries presented based on regional or national SDG indicators. As was noted in 2017, statistical annexes would benefit from an overview of data availability, including disaggregated data, when this information is not listed in the main report. A number of countries also included annexes with best practice or views from other stakeholders, as suggested by the voluntary common reporting guidelines for the 2018 HLPF.

✅ Include a statistical annex in the VNR report as suggested by the voluntary common reporting guidelines.

✅ Report on data availability, including disaggregated data, with reference to global and national level indicators, in the statistical annex. This will provide a better picture of countries' overall capacity to monitor SDG implementation.

6.0 Conclusion

The VNRs offer an opportunity to strengthen national level accountability and demonstrate accountability for 2030 Agenda implementation on the global stage. This review of 2018 VNR reports identified a number of best practices that countries, civil society organisations and citizens can take forward in SDG implementation and reporting to the HLPF.

While this analysis has used the VNR reports that countries provided as its basis of analysis, it is important to remember that VNRs are much more than just reports. In reading the VNR reports, it is clear that countries continue to value the VNR process and use it as more than just a means to an end. For Armenia, the VNR was an important participatory process that provided the government with an opportunity to assess its work in the scope of the SDGs and identify opportunities for achieving priorities going forward. According to the Armenia VNR report, an important lesson from the VNR process was that "the dialogue effort was critical for generating ideas for effective solutions, building confidence and establishing partnerships to coordinate and implement programs" (p. 16). The VNR also helped to localise the SDGs and raise awareness among stakeholders regarding their own and each other's roles in 2030 Agenda implementation. For Bhutan, the VNR process helped to engage stakeholders and create ownership in implementation. Ireland's VNR report noted that the process raised awareness of the SDGs across government. The VNR process in Lithuania contributed to strengthened cooperation between the government and non-governmental organisations. It also prompted the formulation of national priority areas for the country in 2030 Agenda implementation. According to Malta's VNR report, the VNR process was a learning opportunity and helped to create awareness and ownership over the SDGs, in particular for the public sector. In Spain, the VNR jumpstarted 2030 Agenda implementation and drove commitments from all stakeholders.

Fifty-one countries will present VNR reports to the 2019 HLPF, ten for the second time. This report has identified best practice in 2030 Agenda implementation and VNR reporting that can support countries to realise sustainable development for everyone and ensure effective reporting to the HLPF, contributing to its value as a forum for peer learning and exchange. As stated previously, 2019 is a crucial year for the 2030 Agenda, marking the end of the first four-year cycle of delivery and monitoring since 2015. At the HLPF in September 2019, Heads of State will assess overall progress on implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

In early 2020, the format and organisation of the HLPF will be reviewed. Whilst the structure of the review is not yet known, it will aim to "benefit from lessons learned in the first cycle of the forum as well as from other processes" (UNGA Resolution 70/299, para 21). This report has outlined a significant number of lessons from the 2018 VNR process and, in addition to the reports covering 2016 and 2017, civil society has developed detailed feedback and recommendations based on extensive engagement. As the structure of the review is agreed, it should include forums for meaningful participation by civil society and other stakeholders.

The review of the HLPF should examine, among other things, how VNR reporting can be improved following the recommendations outlined in this report, recognising that the VNRs serve as an important mechanism for national accountability for 2030 Agenda implementation and the basis for follow-up and review at the HLPF. More time and space should also be given to the presentation and discussion of the VNRs at HLPF meetings – this is essential if the original vision of the positive and constructive follow up and review mechanisms outlined in the 2030 Agenda are to become reality. Future HLPF meetings should include constructive forums for the meaningful participation of civil society, recognising their valuable contributions to SDG implementation and follow-up and review. Furthermore, future HLPF meetings should provide additional opportunities for exchange of views and inclusion of independent assessments, including reports from civil society and expert analysis, which would enable member states to benefit from a wider pool of knowledge.

We hope that this review provides useful insight and suggestions that will help shape and guide the process as countries return to New York in July and September to improve and refine their plans for the coming years of delivery. Many of the key recommendations from this report and its predecessors will provide a strong evidence base for improving the process of follow-up and review. It is our hope that the coming years can provide the critical step change towards even greater ambition for the future.

Annexes
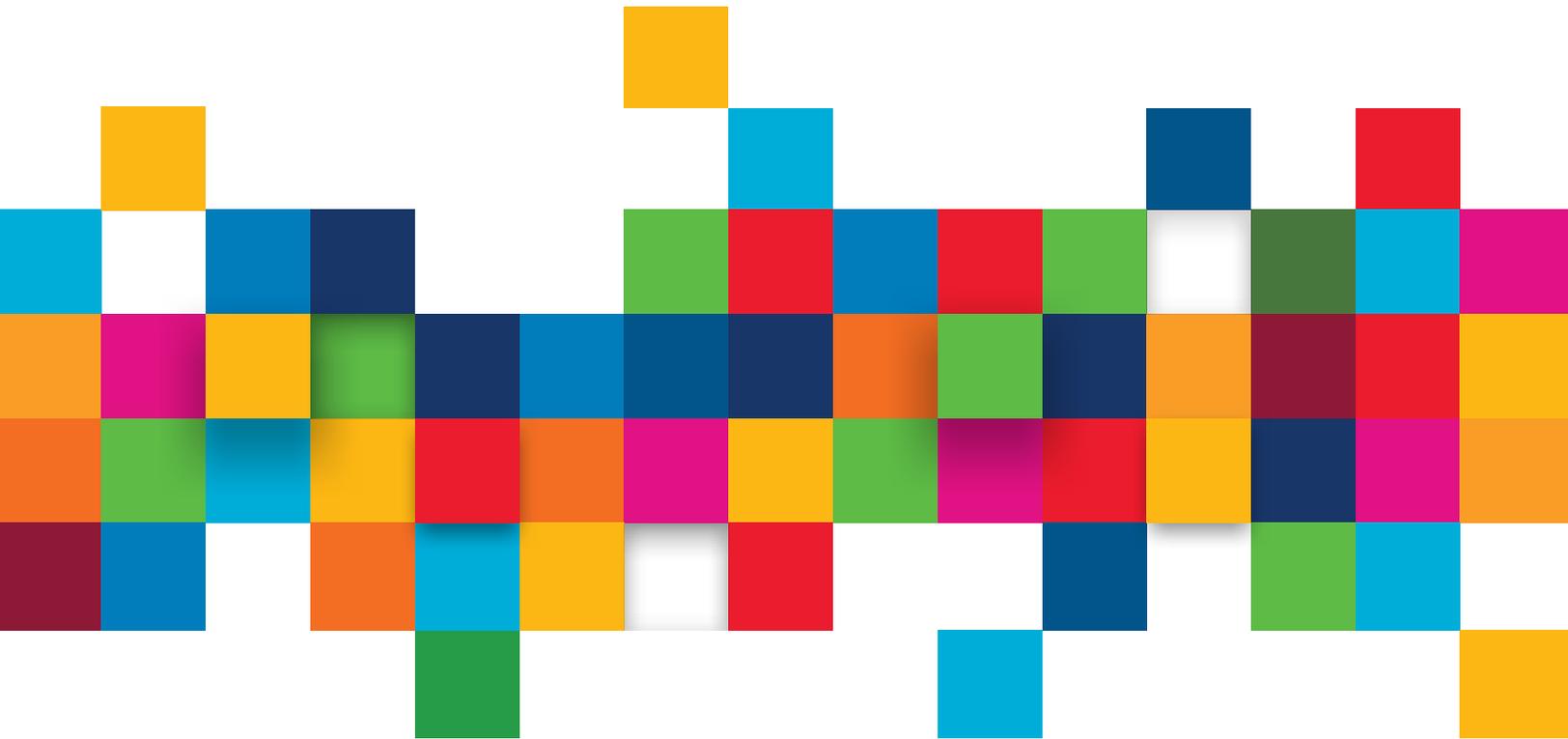
Progressing national SDGs implementation:

An independent assessment of the voluntary national review reports submitted to the United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in 2018

The Third Edition in an annual series commissioned by civil society organisations

Annex 1. VNR reports reviewed

All 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 are high-income – 22 – according to World Bank country classifications. Six are low-income, nine lower-middle-income, and nine upper-middle-income.

Thirteen (13) countries from Europe, 12 from Asia, ten from Africa (all from sub-Saharan Africa with the exception of Egypt) and nine from Latin America and the Caribbean[1] reported according to United Nations classifications. Australia was the only country from the Oceania region reviewed.

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1   Three (3) of the 14 Latin America and Caribbean countries are from the Caribbean.

Progressing national SDGs implementation: Annex 1. VNR reports reviewed   **a2**

TABLE A1. COUNTRIES REVIEWED IN THE ANALYSIS OF 2017 VNR REPORTS

COUNTRY	REGION[2]	SUB-REGION[3]	INCOME LEVEL[4]
Albania	Europe	Southern Europe	Upper-middle-income country
Andorra	Europe	Southern Europe	High-income country
Armenia	Asia	Western Asia	Upper-middle-income country
Australia	Oceania	Australia and New Zealand	High-income country
Bahamas	Americas	Caribbean	High-income country
Bahrain	Asia	Western Asia	High-income country
Benin	Africa	Western Africa	Low-income country
Bhutan	Asia	Southern Asia	Lower-middle-income country
Cabo Verde	Africa	Western Africa	Lower-middle-income country
Canada	Americas	Northern America	High-income country
Colombia	Americas	South America	Upper-middle-income country
Dominican Republic	Americas	Caribbean	Upper-middle-income country
Ecuador	Americas	South America	Upper-middle-income country
Egypt	Africa	Northern Africa	Lower-middle-income country
Greece	Europe	Southern Europe	High-income country
Guinea	Africa	Western Africa	Low-income country
Hungary	Europe	Eastern Europe	High-income country
Ireland	Europe	Channel Islands	High-income country
Jamaica	Americas	Caribbean	Upper-middle-income country
Kiribati	Oceania	Micronesia	Lower-middle-income country
Lao People's Democratic Republic	Asia	South-eastern Asia	Lower-middle-income country
Latvia	Europe	Channel Islands	High-income country
Lebanon	Asia	Western Asia	Upper-middle-income country
Lithuania	Europe	Channel Islands	High-income country

Progressing national SDGs implementation: Annex 1. VNR reports reviewed

a3

COUNTRY	REGION[2]	SUB-REGION[3]	INCOME LEVEL[4]
Mali	Africa	Western Africa	Low-income country
Malta	Europe	Southern Europe	High-income country
Mexico	Americas	Central America	Upper-middle-income country
Namibia	Africa	Southern Africa	Lower-middle-income country
Niger	Africa	Western Africa	Low-income country
Paraguay	Americas	South America	Upper-middle-income country
Poland	Europe	Eastern Europe	High-income country
Qatar	Asia	Western Asia	High-income country
Romania	Europe	Eastern Europe	High-income country
Saudi Arabia	Asia	Western Asia	High-income country
Senegal	Africa	Western Africa	Low-income country
Singapore	Asia	South-eastern Asia	High-income country
Slovakia	Europe	Eastern Europe	High-income country
Spain	Europe	Southern Europe	High-income country
Sri Lanka	Asia	Southern Asia	Lower-middle-income country
State of Palestine	Asia	Western Asia	Not classified
Sudan	Africa	Northern Africa	Lower-middle-income country
Switzerland	Europe	Western Europe	High-income country
Togo	Africa	Western Africa	Low-income country
United Arab Emirates	Asia	Western Asia	High-income country
Uruguay	Americas	South America	High-income country
Viet Nam	Asia	South-eastern Asia	Lower-middle-income country

2   According to UN classifications.

3   According to UN classifications.

4   According to World Bank classifications for the 2019 fiscal year.

Annex 2. Methodology

A2.1 Research team

The research was led by Shannon Kindornay, Independent Consultant and Adjunct Research Professor at Carleton University. Ms. Kindornay developed the framework for analysis for the 2017 review, building on the pillars of analysis in the 2016 review,[5] and revised the framework for the 2018 review. Overall, the revisions are minor and included additional sub-categories for examination to capture issues that were not sufficiently addressed in the 2017 review including environmental dimensions, efforts to leave no one behind and budgeting for 2030 Agenda implementation. In addition, the revision included slight refinement of existing categories. This was done to improve the consistency and increase the depth of data collection with the research team required to provide additional information from VNR reports, particularly for set response sub-categories. The changes are detailed in table A2.1 below. Ms. Kindornay reviewed 30 of the English language reports and the main message for Kiribati and Sudan, managed contributions from other members of the research team and carried out the analysis that informs this review.

Javier Surasky, Governance for Development Research Area Coordinator from the Centro de Pensamiento Estratégico Internacional (CEPEI), reviewed eight VNR reports for Latin America and the Caribbean[6] (Spanish and English reports) and available Spanish civil society reports; he also provided written inputs to the review, including good practice case studies for the region and country profiles, and commented on a draft version of the report. Nathalie Risse, Thematic expert on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development of the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), reviewed six French VNR reports for Andorra, Benin, Guinea, Mali, Niger, and Senegal and available French civil society reports; she also prepared country profiles and good practice case studies, and provided comments on a draft version of the report. Anas El Hasnaoui, Development Consultant, Arab NGO Network for Development (ANND), reviewed the one Arabic VNR report for Bahrain and prepared the country profile.

A2.2. Research approach

The research team examined all VNR reports to the HLPF in 2018, according to the framework outlined in Table A2.1. The framework includes ten pillars of analysis:

LEADERSHIP, GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

BASELINE OR GAP ANALYSIS

INCORPORATION OF THE 2030 AGENDA INTO NATIONAL FRAMEWORKS AND POLICIES

NATIONALISING THE 2030 AGENDA AWARENESS RAISING AND LOCALISATION

INTEGRATION AND POLICY COHERENCE

IMPLEMENTING THE 2030 AGENDA

LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND

PARTNERSHIP TO REALISE THE 2030 AGENDA

MEASUREMENT AND REPORTING

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5   Cutter, 2016.

6   The Bahamas, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Jamaica, Mexico, Paraguay and Uruguay.

In addition to these pillars, the framework includes an assessment of the extent to which countries followed the Secretary General's voluntary common reporting guidelines. It has been updated to reflect the changes made to the Secretary General's voluntary common reporting guidelines in 2017 for the 2018 HLPF with major changes noted directly in the table.

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), text was drawn directly from the VNR reports to ensure the highest level of accuracy. In some cases, researchers paraphrased information when the text from VNR reports was more than 200 words. In addition, 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. To ensure consistency in the analysis, all data was reviewed by the lead researcher and clarifications were sought from the research team where necessary.

A2.3 Data sources

All VNR reports are available through the United Nations Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform. 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. This is a clear limitation of the findings.

Civil society reports are available for 17 of the countries reviewed in 2018. Reports for Bhutan, Canada, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ireland, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Mexico, Senegal, Spain, Sri Lanka, State of Palestine, Sudan, Switzerland, Togo, and Viet Nam can be found on the Action for Sustainable Development website.

TABLE A2.1 FRAMEWORK FOR ASSESSING VNR REPORTING TO THE 2017 HLPF

CATEGORY	SUB-COMPONENT	DESCRIPTION	OPTIONS
Country name	n/a	Provide country name	Short version, e.g. Ethiopia rather than Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia.
Region	n/a	Based on United Nations Statistics Division classifications.	Region as stipulated in the classification.
Sub-Region	n/a	Based on United Nations Statistics Division classifications.	Intermediate region as stipulated in the classification.
Income level	n/a	World Bank classification for the 2019 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.
Incorporation of the SDGs into national frameworks and policies	Evidence of change to realise the SDGs	Refers to the extent to which the VNR report shows that steps are being taken to deliver the SDGs.	Provide summary assessment. Evidence of a change in approach could include: 1) changes to key policies and frameworks; and /or the 2) creation of particular initiatives to address a gap identified as a result of the SDGs. Where evidence of change is limited, ask whether the report appears to be business as usual with an SDG spin and provide your assessment.

Progressing national SDGs implementation: Annex 2. Methodology   **a7**

CATEGORY	SUB-COMPONENT	DESCRIPTION	OPTIONS
Incorporation of the SDGs into national frameworks and policies	Reference to principles of Agenda 2030 – human rights-based approach	Whether the VNR report refers to the use of a human rights-based approach in the implementation of the SDGs.	Yes; Indicate if report refers specifically to the human rights-based approach or has a strong human rights focus. Include description of how the human rights-based approach is defined if explained, otherwise indicate that it is referred to but not defined.
			No.
Incorporation of the SDGs into national frameworks and policies	Reference to principles of Agenda 2030 – universality	Whether the VNR report refers to the universality of Agenda 2030.	Yes.
			No.
Incorporation of the SDGs into national frameworks and policies	Reference to 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.
Incorporation of the SDGs into national frameworks and policies	Reference to principles of Agenda 2030 – planetary boundaries	Whether the VNR refers to planetary boundaries generally.	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.
Incorporation of the SDGs into national frameworks and policies	Reference to 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.

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CATEGORY	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 lead department.
			Existing council or committee with implementation through lead department.
			Creation of specialised office.
			Council or committee established with implementation through government institutions.
			Other.
			Unclear from the VNR report.
			Not articulated in the VNR report.
Leadership, governance and institutional mechanisms	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.
Leadership, governance and institutional mechanisms	Non-state actor official engagement in SDG implementation 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.

CATEGORY	SUB-COMPONENT	DESCRIPTION	OPTIONS
Leadership, governance and institutional mechanisms	Regional coordination on the SDGs	Extent to which the country is engaged in coordinating efforts at the regional level. Must refer to specific SDG related activities – not just whether they are part of a particular regional body under climate change or trade e.g. – must be specifically about the SDGs.	Participates.
			Does not participate.
			Not articulated in the VNR report.
Leadership, governance and institutional mechanisms	Activities at 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.
Leadership, governance and institutional mechanisms	Engagement in special country groupings on the SDG	Description of the grouping to which the country belongs (for example, land locked, small island, least developed, etc.) and the activities it is pursuing as noted in the VNR report. Must refer to specific SDG related activities – not just whether they are part of a particular regional body under climate change or trade e.g. – must be specifically about the SDGs.	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.
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 in relation to the SDGs.	Assessment carried out for all SDGs.
			Assessment carried out for some SDGs.
			Assessment planned.
			No assessment carried out.
			Not articulated in the VNR report.

CATEGORY	SUB-COMPONENT	DESCRIPTION	OPTIONS
Baseline or gap analysis	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.
Baseline or gap analysis	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	Refers to the composition of SDGs examined in the VNR report.	All SDGs examined.
			SDGs covered by the HLPF theme examined.
			Limited set of country selected SDGs examined.
			SDGs not examined.

CATEGORY	SUB-COMPONENT	DESCRIPTION	OPTIONS
Integration and policy coherence	Specific SDGs examined by the VNR	Refers to the specific SDGs examined in the VNR report.	All 17 SDGs.
			List the specific SDGs examined, by short title only and include their numbering, separated by semi-colons, no period at end of list. (1. No poverty; 2. Zero hunger; 3. Good health and well-being; 4. Quality education; 5. Gender equality; 6. Clean water and sanitation; 7. Affordable and clean energy; 8. Decent work and economic growth; 9. Industry, innovation and infrastructure; 10. Reduced inequalities; 11. Sustainable cities and communities; 12. Responsible consumption and production; 13. Climate action; 14. Life below water; 15. Life on land; 16. Peace, justice and strong institutions; 17. Partnerships for the goals).
			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.
Integration and policy coherence	Detailed analysis	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.

CATEGORY	SUB-COMPONENT	DESCRIPTION	OPTIONS
Integration and policy coherence	Economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development	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 greater focus on economic.
			All dimensions addressed but greater focus on social.
			All dimensions addressed but 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 and policy coherence	Integration in SDG implementation	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.
Integration and policy coherence	Reference to policy coherence for sustainable development	Whether the report refers to policy coherence for sustainable development:	Yes.
			No.

CATEGORY	SUB-COMPONENT	DESCRIPTION	OPTIONS
Integration and policy coherence	Assessment of domestic and foreign policies on SDG outcomes	Whether the report includes a systematic assessment of how domestic and foreign policies impact the realisation of the SDGs in country and globally.	Assessment of domestic and foreign policies on realisation of SDGs globally.
			Assessment of domestic policies on realisation of SDGs globally.
			Assessment of foreign policies on realisation of SDG globally.
			No assessment of domestic or foreign policies on realisation of SDGs globally.
Integration and policy coherence	Overall approach to policy coherence to sustainable development	Reviewer summary of how PCSD is understood if referenced. Clearly state if understood in terms of policy coherence within the country or in terms of the impacts of the impacts of domestic policies and foreign policies on SDG outcomes is addressed in the report. 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.
Integration and policy coherence	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.
Integration and policy coherence	Tackling climate change	How the reports 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.
Integration and policy coherence	Linkages to the Convention on Biological Diversity	Whether the report links SDG implementation to the Convention on Biological Diversity.	Yes.
			No.

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CATEGORY	SUB-COMPONENT	DESCRIPTION	OPTIONS
Integration and policy coherence	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.
Integration and policy coherence	Linkages to the Addis Ababa Action Agenda	Whether the report links SDG implementation to the Addis Ababa Action agenda.	Yes.
			No.
Integration and policy coherence	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.
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.
Leave no one behind	Targets of efforts to leave no one behind	Groups within society as 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.
Leave no one behind	Approaches to targeting those left behind	Type of programmes / approaches adopted to leave no one behind. List all that apply.	Existing specialised programmes for specific groups.
			New specialised programmes for specific groups.
			Universal programmes such as social assistance.
			Not articulated in the VNR report.

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CATEGORY	SUB-COMPONENT	DESCRIPTION	OPTIONS
Leave no one behind	Efforts to leave no one behind	In addition to noting the efforts as listed (the specific programmes (existing, new or universal, following from above category)), provide an indication of whether the country has adopted an overarching approach to translate the commitment into guidance for policy, targets, goals, etc.	Provide direct text from the VNR report or if longer than 200 words, provide a summary.
			Not articulated in the VNR report.
Leave no one behind	Reducing domestic inequalities	Efforts specifically geared towards reducing domestic inequalities as outlined in the VNR report.	Provide direct text from the VNR report or if longer than 200 words, provide a summary.
			Not articulated in the VNR report.
Leave no one behind	Results of efforts to leave no one behind	The results of efforts to leave no one behind as outlined in the report.	Provide direct text from the VNR or if longer than 200 words, provide a summary
			Not articulated in the VNR report.
Raising awareness and creating ownership of SDGs	Awareness-raising efforts carried out by government	Whether the government took efforts, including working in partnership with others, to raise awareness about the SDGs at country level.	Yes; Include what efforts were taken in the notes section.
			No.
			Not articulated in the VNR report.
Raising awareness and creating ownership of SDGs	Nationalisation 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.

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CATEGORY	SUB-COMPONENT	DESCRIPTION	OPTIONS
Raising awareness and creating ownership of SDGs	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.
Raising awareness and creating ownership of SDGs	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.
Raising awareness and creating ownership of SDGs	Localisation of the SDG agenda at country level	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.	Provide direct text from the VNR or if longer than 200 words, provide a summary.
			Not articulated in VNR report.

CATEGORY	SUB-COMPONENT	DESCRIPTION	OPTIONS
Stakeholder engagement	Consultation with national stakeholders 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.
Stakeholder engagement	Non-state actor engagement in the development of VNR reports	Whether non-state actors were engaged in the development of the VNR report.	Yes.
			No.
			Unclear from the VNR report.
Stakeholder engagement	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 link.
			No.
Implementing the 2030 Agenda – Experiences	Best practices as identified by the country	The Secretary General guidelines for the VNR report invite countries to outline 2-3 best practices.	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 - Experiences	Lessons learned in accelerating implementation	The Secretary General guidelines for the VNR report invite countries to outline 2-3 lessons learned in accelerating implementation of the SDGs.	Provide direct text from the VNR report or if longer than 200 words, provide a summary.
			Not articulated in the VNR report.
Implementing the 2030 Agenda - Experiences	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.	Provide direct text from the VNR report or if longer than 200 words, provide a summary.
			Not articulated in the VNR report.

CATEGORY	SUB-COMPONENT	DESCRIPTION	OPTIONS
Implementing the 2030 Agenda - Capacity	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 the VNR report.
Implementing the 2030 Agenda – Capacity	Means of implementation - technology	Whether the report refers to technology in the discussion of the means of implementation and/or goal analysis. Include 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).	Provide direct text from the VNR report or if longer than 200 words, provide a summary.
			Not articulated in the VNR report.
Implementing the 2030 Agenda - Capacity	Means of implementation - capacity development	Whether the report refers to capacity development in the discussion of the means of implementation and/or goal analysis. Include 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).	Provide direct text from the VNR report or if longer than 200 words, provide a summary.
			Not articulated in the VNR report.

CATEGORY	SUB-COMPONENT	DESCRIPTION	OPTIONS
Implementing the 2030 Agenda – Capacity	Means of implementation - systemic issues	Whether the report refers to systemic issues. Policy coherence and data issues are captured by different sub-categories. 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).	Provide direct text from the VNR report or if longer than 200 words, provide a summary. Not articulated in the VNR report.
Implementing the 2030 Agenda – Finance	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.
Implementing the 2030 Agenda -Finance	Reference to financing Agenda 2030 at country level	Whether the report references financing needs to realise the 2030 Agenda at country level and how efforts will be funded. Include in notes section description of efforts (domestic resource mobilisation, 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.

CATEGORY	SUB-COMPONENT	DESCRIPTION	OPTIONS
Implementing the 2030 Agenda - Finance	Means of implementation - 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 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 support they provide (or their views on these issues).	Provide direct text from the VNR report or if longer than 200 words, provide a summary.

Not articulated in the VNR report. |
| Implementing the 2030 Agenda -Finance | Means of implementation - trade | Whether the report refers to trade in the discussion of the means of implementation and/or goal analysis. Include description of the country's own efforts as well as support by development partners (or support given if examining a high-income country). | Provide direct text from the VNR report or if longer than 200 words, provide a summary.

Not articulated in the VNR report. |
| Partnership to realise the SDGs | Local non-state actor participation in implementation | Whether non-state actors are engaged in implementation of the SDGs. | Yes; Indicate generic information on how broadly.

No. |
| Partnership to realise the SDGs | Multi-stakeholder implementation of the SDGs – parliamentarians | Articulation of how and which parliamentarians are involved in the implementation of the SDGs beyond participation in consultations, governance or institutional mechanisms. 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 VNR report. |

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CATEGORY	SUB-COMPONENT	DESCRIPTION	OPTIONS
Partnership to realise the SDGs	Multi-stakeholder implementation of the SDGs – 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. 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 VNR report.
Partnership to realise the SDGs	Multi-stakeholder implementation of the SDGs – 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. 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 VNR report.
Partnership to realise the SDGs	Multi-stakeholder implementation of the SDGs – 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. 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 VNR report.
Partnership to realise the SDGs	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. 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 VNR report.

Progressing national SDGs implementation: Annex 2. Methodology   **a22**

CATEGORY	SUB-COMPONENT	DESCRIPTION	OPTIONS
Partnership to realise the SDGs	Priority areas for development partner support	Articulation of key areas in which the government requires additional support to realise 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.
Partnership to realise the SDGs	The role of development partners	Articulation of the 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 is 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.
Partnership to realise the SDGs	Support provided to 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 (HIC), state Not applicable.

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CATEGORY	SUB-COMPONENT	DESCRIPTION	OPTIONS
Measurement and reporting	Data availability	Description of the percentage of SDG indicators for which data is available (existing indicators and proxy indicators combined).	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.
Measurement and reporting	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.
Measurement and reporting	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.
Measurement and reporting	National reporting on the SDGs	How the government plans to report on the SDGs.	Provide direct text from the VNR report or if longer than 200 words, provide a summary.
			Not articulated in the VNR report.

CATEGORY	SUB-COMPONENT	DESCRIPTION	OPTIONS
Secretary General's Voluntary Common Reporting Guidelines	Statement by HoSG	Opening statement by the Head of State or Government, a Minister or other high-ranking Government official and could highlight the current status of SDG progress and how the Government is responding to the transformative nature of the 2030 Agenda.	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.
Secretary General's Voluntary Common Reporting Guidelines	Highlights (previously Executive Summary)	One to two pages highlighting: review process, status of SDG progress, how govt is responding to integrated and integrated nature of the SDGs and leave no one behind, examples from each good practice, lessons learned, and key challenges to learn from others and where support needed.	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.
Secretary General's Voluntary Common Reporting Guidelines	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.	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.

CATEGORY	SUB-COMPONENT	DESCRIPTION	OPTIONS
Secretary General's Voluntary Common Reporting Guidelines	Methodology for review	This section may discuss the process for preparation of 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.	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.
Secretary General's Voluntary Common Reporting Guidelines	Creating ownership	Policy and Enabling Environment, Creating ownership of the SDGs. Refers to efforts made towards all stakeholders to inform them on and involve them in the SDGs.	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.
Secretary General's Voluntary Common Reporting Guidelines	Incorporation in national frameworks	Policy and Enabling Environment, Incorporation of the SDGs in 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. Can also refer to local governments.	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.

CATEGORY	SUB-COMPONENT	DESCRIPTION	OPTIONS
Secretary General's Voluntary Common Reporting Guidelines	Integration of three dimensions	Policy and Enabling Environment, Integration of the three dimensions. 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. Can include analysis related to the yearly HLPF theme.	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.
Secretary General's Voluntary Common Reporting Guidelines	Leave no one behind (yearly HLPF theme was removed for 2018)	Policy and Enabling Environment, Goals and targets: Provides brief Policy and Enabling Environment, leave no one behind: Provides assessment of how principle of leave no one behind is mainstreamed in implementation, including identification of vulnerable groups, data issues, and policies and programmes. Special attention on efforts for women and girls.	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.
Secretary General's Voluntary Common Reporting Guidelines	Institutional mechanisms	Policy and Enabling Environment, Institutional mechanisms: Refers to how the country has adapted its institutional framework in order to implement the 2030 Agenda. Can include information on institutions and non-state actors, coordination, review plans.	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.

CATEGORY	SUB-COMPONENT	DESCRIPTION	OPTIONS
Secretary General's Voluntary Common Reporting Guidelines	Structural issues	Policy and Enabling Environment, Structural issues: Refers to relevant structural issues or barriers, including possible external consequences of domestic policies. Can highlight transformative approaches to address barriers.	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.
Secretary General's Voluntary Common Reporting Guidelines	Goals and targets	Progress on 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 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 first review.	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.

CATEGORY	SUB-COMPONENT	DESCRIPTION	OPTIONS
Secretary General's Voluntary Common Reporting Guidelines	Means of implementation	Description of how means of implementation are mobilised, what difficulties this process faces, and what additional resources are needed based on review of challenges and trends. Can indicate how financial systems and resource allocation is being aligned with realising the 2030 agenda and cover their technology and capacity development needs including for data. Contributions of multi-stakeholder partnerships.	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.
Secretary General's Voluntary Common Reporting Guidelines	Next steps	Provides outline what steps the country is taking or planning to take to enhance the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Can also outline review plans for national and sub-national levels, including dissemination.	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.
Secretary General's Voluntary Common Reporting Guidelines	Conclusion	A summary of the analysis, findings and policy implications. Can refer to new and emerging issues identified, and lessons learned from review process.	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.

CATEGORY	SUB-COMPONENT	DESCRIPTION	OPTIONS
Secretary General's Voluntary Common Reporting Guidelines	Annexes	An annex with data, using the global SDG indicators as a starting point and adding priority national/ regional indicators and identifying gaps. Can also use additional annexes to showcase best practice and comments from stakeholders on the report.	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.

CATEGORY	SUB-COMPONENT	DESCRIPTION	OPTIONS

Annex 3. Country Profiles

A3. 1 Overview of country profiles

The review provides an aggregate analysis of the key findings for the 46 VNR reporting countries in 2018. With the exception of the best practice case studies, there are limited references to individual country progress against the pillars of analysis that make up the review.

This annex presents two-page profiles for all 46 countries according to the pillars of analysis of the review. The information presented summarises key information from the VNR reports into two-to-three pages. 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 report, as well as best practice. 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.

Albania

In 2018, Albania 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

An Inter-Ministerial Committee on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) has been established to oversee SDG implementation, chaired by the deputy prime minister of Albania. The committee includes representation from government institutions, the private sector, civil society, academia and international organisations. It is supported by the Department of Development and Good Governance in the Prime Minister's Office and a SDG Inter-institutional Technical Working Group that includes representatives from relevant government institutions. A Government of Albania-United Nations SDG Task Force exists, as well as an Albanian Institute of Statistics-United Nations joint data group. The Inter-ministerial Committee provides overall guidance on SDG implementation.

Stakeholder engagement

The report notes the government's commitment to the creation of an enabling environment for SDG implementation that facilitates contributions from all stakeholders in society. The report is unclear in terms of what stakeholder engagement entails. Nevertheless, it notes that through the VNR consultation, civil society organisations identified ways to improve engagement going forward (though the report does not present details in this regard).

Policies

Baseline or gap analysis

Two assessments have been carried out. In 2016, a United Nations Rapid Integrated Assessment was carried out to examine alignment between the 169 SDG targets and national policies, finding roughly 60% align. In 2017, a more detailed policy area assessment was carried out, finding that 140 SDG targets (83%) are directly tied to the National Strategy for Development and Integration.

Incorporating the SDGs

The government reported on the extent to which the SDGs align with the existing National Strategy for Development and Integration 2015–20 and noted that efforts will be taken to further integrate the SDGs into policies and plans going forward. The VNR report refers to the principles of universality and leaving no one behind. While it includes a strong focus on human rights, it does not refer to a human rights-based approach. Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development principles related to planetary boundaries and intergenerational responsibility are not mentioned, though the report does give attention to water and land management, biodiversity and climate change.

Nationalising the 2030 Agenda

The country has yet to select national priorities for the SDGs (beyond its existing priorities as outlined in the National Strategy for Development and Integration which are most aligned with SDG 3 on good health and well-being, SDG 7 on affordable and clean energy, SDG 8 on good jobs and economic growth and SDG 9 on industry, innovation and infrastructure). The government plans to establish a Strategic Vision for 2030 by 2020 through a "bottom-up" process that will include consultation with a wide range of stakeholders.

Integration and policy coherence

The VNR report reviews policy priority areas for Albania and makes reference to relevant SDGs in that context. It does not provide a goal-by-goal analysis, though the annex includes a set of 30 indicators that cover most, though not all SDGs. The report provides a detailed assessment of the priority areas, but inconsistently presents the linkages between them, with a greater focus on economic dimensions of sustainable development. Policy coherence for sustainable development is not mentioned. The report is also limited in terms of linking the SDGs to other relevant international frameworks and agreements. It refers only to the Paris Agreement and the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Means of implementation

⟲ Implementing the 2030 Agenda

The report notes a number of challenges for SDG implementation, including establishing a national vision, identifying gaps and ways to accelerate progress, further localising the SDGs, data availability and strengthening the institutional capacity of all stakeholders to effectively contribute to the SDGs. The report highlights Albania's success with urban transformation and justice reform, and notes its positive experience with the United Nations mainstreaming, acceleration and policy support (MAPS) programme. There is a detailed discussion of budgeting for the SDGs in the report that outlines the findings from an assessment of expenditures during 2015-17 in terms of allocations to the SDGs. The report notes that the country plans to prepare a SDG roadmap that will include reference to cost implications. It also states that "starting from the next strategic planning framework, Albania will work to fully incorporate the SDGs in the budget planning framework" (p. 74) which will support fund allocation.

✋ Leave no one behind

The report has a strong emphasis on leaving no one behind and the issue of social inclusion. It provides a detailed overview of the challenges facing women, children, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) communities, Roma, Egyptians, the poor and persons with disabilities across a range of areas such as education, employment and health. Data is presented throughout with a frank assessment of current legislation, policies and programmes, and where additional efforts are needed going forward. The report notes that improving social inclusion, including promoting gender equality and the protection of human rights are key priorities for the government.

◎ Awareness raising and localisation

The report notes that awareness raising on the SDGs has occurred, including through the VNR, but does not provide specific details. The report does not provide information on the specific role of local governments in realising the SDGs, though it does note that future monitoring frameworks for efforts related to urban transformation will include SDG indicators.

⧉ Partnership to realise the SDGs

While the report recognises that SDG implementation requires contributions from a wide range of stakeholders, it is limited in terms of information on multi-stakeholder partnerships and specific contributions by non-state actors. It notes that the parliament has endorsed the SDGs. The National Council of Civil Society has

discussed the SDGs and is set to present a statement on its support for the SDGs while some 25 Albanian universities have signed a declaration on their commitment to supporting SDG implementation. The report refers to the important role of United Nations agencies throughout, noting specific efforts and partnerships related to SDG implementation.

📋 Measurement and reporting

The report does not provide an overall indication of the availability of data. The report includes a commitment to strengthen statistical capacities including strengthening data collection and technical and administrative capacities.

The report notes that the government will institutionalise SDG reporting at national and local levels. However, it is unclear on how reporting will occur. The report also promises that reports will be regular and include consultation with parliament and civil society. The national statistical office is also planning to publish an annual report on the SDGs.

Andorra

In 2018, Andorra 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 Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of the Environment, Agriculture and Sustainable Development both seem to have an important role in leading 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development implementation. An inter-ministerial team, coordinated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, was established to prepare the report, and all departments concerned contributed information for the report.

The report does not refer to any formal institutionalised structure for stakeholder engagement in implementation.

Stakeholder engagement

According to the report, the open Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) public consultation launched by the Government revealed that climate change, responsible consumption (reducing waste and packaging and promoting recycling), and renewable energies should be given more attention by the country. The report notes that measures proposed by participants to progress on sustainable development during the consultation have been analysed, and the most recurrent ones will be submitted to the Council of Ministers for consideration.

A draft of the report was shared with national stakeholders for comments, including the General Council, the Ombudsman, municipal officials, professional schools, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, NGOs and associations, and the National Youth Forum. No civil society report was prepared for the VNR.

Policies

Baseline or gap analysis

The report indicates that a gap analysis was carried out for some SDGs through an examination of policies and data. While most of the report focuses on what has been accomplished by the country to meet the SDGs, it outlines some gaps, including: the insufficient representation of women at the highest decision-making levels, particularly in the private sector, and a lack of coordination between the private and public sectors on the SDGs. In addition, it calls for more attention on issues related to responsible consumption (reducing waste and packaging and promoting recycling) and renewable energies.

Incorporating the SDGs

In 2016, the Council of Ministers decided that all actions submitted to the council for approval should be associated with one or more SDGs so that the 2030 Agenda would become the basis for decisions by the Andorran executive. The report notes that this has resulted in an assessment of the conformity of national policies with the global SDG indicators. Also, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has revised its sectoral priorities for international cooperation in order to integrate the SDGs into its Master Plan for Development Cooperation.

Respect for human rights is stressed as an important priority for the country and is mentioned in several sections of the VNR report. Andorra has an Ombudsman with the mandate to control discrimination in both the public and private sectors, in particular relating to the rights of the child, persons with disabilities, racial discrimination and cross-cutting discrimination related to gender or sexual orientation.

Nationalising the 2030 Agenda

While the report has a strong environmental focus, it states that social policies and promotion of equality and non-discrimination, gender equality, children's rights, and education are transversal priorities of the government.

Integration and policy coherence

The report provides a detailed analysis of eight SDGs, namely the six SDGs examined in-depth during the 2018 High-level Political Forum (SDG 6 on clean water and sanitation, SDG 7 on affordable and clean energy, SDG 11 on sustainable cities and communities, SDG 12 on responsible consumption and production, SDG 15 on life

on land, and SDG 17 on partnerships for the goals). It also assesses SDG 4 on quality education and SDG 13 on climate action, which are of particular importance for Andorra. It indicates that Andorra has chosen to focus its first national report on the SDGs which are mainly related to the environment, but that the government will subsequently present a second national report on the social SDGs.

The report discusses the SDGs at the domestic- and foreign-policy levels. It notes that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' priorities are in perfect coherence with the SDGs.

Means of implementation
Implementing the 2030 Agenda

Considering the small size of the country, the report outlines a lack of capacity for monitoring all obligations arising from its international commitments. The report does not make reference to financing needs to realise the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at country level and to the different ways SDG implementation efforts will be funded.

The report specifies that children constitute one of the priority groups for development aid and that in 2017, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs allocated 24% of its development aid to international cooperation programmes aimed at improving the lives of children.

Leave no one behind

The report does not include a dedicated chapter on leaving no one behind, but puts emphasis on helping the most vulnerable, including children, women, and people with disabilities. It refers to a variety of existing and new programmes to leave no one behind, and states that a white paper on equality was developed in 2016–17 to assess the current situation in terms of inequalities and discrimination, following a decision by the Andorran parliament. According to the report, the white paper was prepared with the participation of civil society, in particular members of the most vulnerable communities.

Awareness raising and localisation

In April 2018, the Andorran government launched an open SDG public consultation on the Internet to raise SDG awareness, and used a survey to gather views of the population. In order to encourage participation in this consultation, the government conducted a major campaign through the media including newspapers and radio.

The report does not explicitly explain how the SDGs are implemented at the local level. However, it provides examples of actions taken at the community level to implement some of the SDGs, such as the Green School project.

GOOD PRACTICE SPOTLIGHT
In Andorra, education for sustainable development has been integrated into formal education and approximately 6,200 students participate each year in activities organised in schools by the Andorra Sostenible Center (Andorra Sustainability Centre) and the education teams of the Ministry of the Environment, Agriculture and Sustainable Development. Per the VNR report, the "Green School" project has become a key program in the field of formal education in the country: it has been implemented in 19 of the country's 29 schools (65%) and involves 7,237 students, which corresponds to 66% of the total number of students.

Partnership to realise the SDGs

The report points to initiatives of the private sector to make progress on the SDGs, and indicates that starting in 2019, the Ministry of the Environment will set up an advisory process for all the companies in the country, so as to better integrate sustainable development principles in their activities. It also notes that the 2016 Andorra University summer school was dedicated to the SDGs, and hosted experts and institutional representatives.

GOOD PRACTICE SPOTLIGHT
MoraBanc, one of the five banks of the country, has divided the impact of its social responsibility into four sectors: customers, the "human team", the community and the environment. For each sector of activity, some SDGs were highlighted and concrete activities were associated with ten of the 17 SDGs. The Andorran Credit Bank has chosen to be associated with six SDGs, reflected in its corporate social responsibility policy. In order to participate "actively and locally in the SDGs", the bank made efforts to reduce the environmental impact of its physical activities. Compared to 2016, the company reduced its electricity consumption by 11.9%, fuel consumption (heating) by 15.9%, carbon dioxide emissions by 13.6%, water consumption by 46.6%, and paper use by 14%.

Measurement and reporting

The report cites the production of statistical data as a major
challenge in view of the growing need for official statistics. It says
the government approved the Statistical Plan 2018–21 in February
2018, "which is a fundamental tool for organising, regulating and
systematizing Andorra's statistical activity" (p. 91), and gender will
be systematically introduced into national statistics related studies.

Armenia

In 2018, Armenia 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 2002, Armenia established a National Council of Sustainable Development. The council is under the leadership of the prime minister and includes representatives from government and civil society. The council coordinates activities to ensure Armenia meets its international commitments to sustainable development, and works to translate commitments into national strategies, laws and regulations. In addition to the council, the country has established a number of task teams related to sustainable development in the lead up to the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Most recently, an SDG Nationalization Inter-agency Task Force was established in 2017. The task force coordinates activities by government institutions and civil society and has four working groups, each responsible for different aspects of the nationalisation process. With support from the United Nations, an SDG Innovation Lab has also been established to accelerate SDG implementation by testing innovations, including in partnership with the private sector.

Stakeholder engagement

Beyond inclusion of civil society in governance structures for SDG implementation, the report does not cover processes for stakeholder engagement. However, the report notes that non-state actors where engaged in the VNR process, including discussions on a draft version of the report.

Policies

Baseline or gap analysis

According to the report, Armenia examined its policies, laws and regulations in terms of their linkages to the SDGs as part of the VNR. It also examined data availability, including disaggregated data. The review found that many SDGs targets are reflected in existing policies, however, in vague terms. Corresponding indicators are often missing, available with insufficient detail or disaggregation, or not aligned with relevant SDG indicators.

Incorporating the SDGs

While the SDGs have been incorporated into a number of social sector strategies, including through the use of SDG targets and indicators, Armenia is in the process of designing an overarching development strategy that will draw on the SDG framework. The report refers to the Agenda 2030 principles of a human rights-based approach and leaving no one behind, but does not reference the universal nature of the agenda, inter-generational responsibilities or planetary boundaries (though it does refer to issues related to water and land conservation, climate change and biological diversity).

Nationalising the 2030 Agenda

National SDG priorities have not been selected and will be defined through the development strategy, although existing priorities focus on poverty reduction, human development and mitigating regional disparities.

Integration and policy coherence

The report covers all SDGs except SDG 17 on partnerships for the goals. The annex provides a detailed examination of the goals with equal attention to economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. The analysis also makes linkages between the three dimensions as relevant. The report does not refer to policy coherence for sustainable development and only refers to the impact of domestic and foreign policies on the SDGs globally in the context of the country's support for Syrian refugees. The report refers to relevant climate- and environment-related conventions and frameworks but does not refer to those related to the means of implementation, namely the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and agreements related to aid and development effectiveness.

Means of implementation

Implementing the 2030 Agenda

The report notes a number of successful practices in SDG implementation, including the establishment of the SDG Innovation Lab, the creation of a comprehensive National SDG Statistical Platform and Armenia's experience with integrating the SDGs into

social policies and data collection processes. The key challenges facing the country for SDG implementation include financing for social programmes, improving governance, setting and prioritising realistic targets, allocating funds, changing behaviours, and promoting direct engagement on the SDGs by non-state actors.

The report does not refer to costing the SDGs for country-level implementation but does refer to domestic resource mobilisation, international public finance remittances, and domestic and foreign direct investment as sources of finance. The SDGs do not appear to have been linked to national budgets, however, the report notes that "it is critical to ensure that adequate funding is made available in the state budget, at national and sub-national levels, to finance activities towards achieving SDG-related targets" (p. 31). In the area of trade, the report points to unfriendly relationships with Turkey and Azerbaijan as undermining the country's trading position and development opportunities.

Leave no one behind

The report does not include a chapter on leaving no one behind, however, the goal-by-goal analysis suggests that children with disabilities, women, refugees, stateless persons and other displaced populations are at the greatest risk of being left behind. The report notes that additional data is required to leave no one behind and that the creation of the new development strategy as well as specialised programmes are ways to improve social inclusion for vulnerable groups.

Awareness raising and localisation

The report highlights that the VNR process served as a means to localise the SDGs. Additional efforts to raise awareness are needed, including through the creation of educational materials. According to the report, Armenia would benefit from international support in this area.

The report is unclear on the role of local governments but does emphasize effective local community engagement for SDG implementation.

Partnership to realise the SDGs

While the report notes that SDG implementation is only possible with active engagement by all public and private actors it does not provide details on specific actions being undertaken by parliament, civil society, businesses or academia. The report refers to the need to more proactively engage with diaspora to improve trade and investment linkages.

Measurement and reporting

The report does not outline the current status of data availability for SDG implementation, though it does note that some gaps exist and more efforts are needed to produce disaggregated data. To address data gaps, the report highlights the importance of enhancing institutional capacities and ensuring appropriate allocation of technical, financial and human resources. The report emphasizes a human rights-based approach to data with appropriate levels of disaggregation and a participatory and consultative approach.

The report does not outline national reporting provisions, however, it does note that the SDG Innovation Lab will establish a platform to visualise progress on the SDGs for all segments of society.

Australia

In 2018, Australia 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

An inter-departmental group of senior officials has been established to advise on how to best implement the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) domestically and internationally. The group is chaired by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. According to the report, there has been collaboration with non-state actors and local governments, however, the report does not detail how collaboration is occurring.

💬 Stakeholder engagement

The report does not outline how stakeholder engagement is occurring on SDG implementation. It does, however, detail engagement by non-state actors in the VNR, including in terms of reviewing a draft version of the report.

Policies

📉 Baseline or gap analysis

The report notes that Australia has done an assessment of data for monitoring the SDGs. The assessment included efforts by the national statistical office and other government institutions. The report does not include information on data gaps, but does note that Australia, like other countries, faces the challenge of producing data for indicators for which there is still no agreed-upon methodology for data collection.

⏱ Incorporating the SDGs

The report does not include a discussion of how the SDGs have been formally incorporated into Australia's national plans or how they will be incorporated in the future. Rather, it points to the use of systems thinking to inform policy decisions as an approach that ensures integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development. The report has a strong human-rights focus and notes that Australia takes an explicit human rights-based approach to sustainable development. The report notes the universal nature of the agenda and the importance of leaving no one behind. The report does not refer to environment-related principles of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

GOOD PRACTICE SPOTLIGHT
Australia's VNR report has a strong focus on the 2030 Agenda principle of the human rights-based approach. It outlines what the human rights-based approach means to Australia: "ensuring human rights are respected and protected not only where it is obvious but when it is not – whether […] working to alleviate poverty and inequality, tackling environmental problems or designing cities and infrastructure" (p. 10). Throughout the report, SDGs are linked to specific human rights commitments and frameworks.

📡 Nationalising the 2030 Agenda

National priorities for the SDGs are not articulated in the report. Australia has not developed national targets or indicators.

⚙ Integration and policy coherence

The report covers all 17 SDGs and gives equal attention to the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. The report is strong in terms of identifying linkages between goals areas and includes a discussion of domestic and foreign policies that support the realisation of the SDGs. Policy coherence for sustainable development is not discussed, however, the report makes linkages to a number of relevant international frameworks including the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (repeatedly referred to throughout), the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Paris Agreement on climate change.

Means of implementation
⟳ Implementing the 2030 Agenda

The report identifies strengths in a number of areas that Australia wishes to share its experiences with others: water management, trade, sustainability in mining, disaster risk preparedness, renewable energy and energy efficiency, and public financial management. Beyond generating disaggregated data, there is little information on the challenges the country faces in SDG implementation.

In terms of the means of implementation, the report focuses on Australia's global contributions in the areas of trade, technology and foreign assistance. It does not outline how the means of implementation relate to Australia's domestic implementation of the SDGs and no reference is made to linking the SDGs to national and sub-national budgeting processes.

✋ Leave no one behind

The state of available data to leave no one behind is unclear from the report. While the report notes that the production of disaggregated data is a challenge for Australia, it also presents a detailed narrative on those left behind and efforts to improve social inclusion and reduce inequality. Goals most prominently related to the social sectors include a sub-section on leaving no one behind. Vulnerable groups include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, those from culturally or linguistically-diverse backgrounds, women and girls, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) persons, youth, the elderly, people with disability and those living in remote and rural locations. The report outlines a wide range of existing initiatives, including specialised and universal programmes that support efforts to leave no one behind. Generally speaking, information on the results of efforts to leave no one behind is not available.

⊚ Awareness raising and localisation

The report notes that the VNR process helped to raise awareness of the SDGs and that ongoing efforts are needed. Non-state actors in civil society, academia and business sectors have played a prominent role in raising awareness on the SDGs according to the report.

Steps have been taken to localise the 2030 Agenda. The report highlights engagement with local levels of government on the SDGs and showcases the efforts by local governments to incorporate the SDGs into planning processes.

⤜ Partnership to realise the SDGs

The report highlights the importance of a "whole-of-Australia" approach to SDG implementation. It sets out specific examples of the contributions being made by civil society, the volunteer sector, youth, Indigenous Peoples, the private sector and academia. The role of parliament is not discussed in the report. The report includes specific examples of contributions by non-state actors throughout, including in the goal-by-goal analysis. There is a strong emphasis on the role of non-state actors in helping to raise awareness of the SDGs and mobilising efforts towards implementation. The report noted that it is impossible to cover the full range of efforts being undertaken across Australian society that were highlighted during the VNR. As a result, the government plans to establish an online national platform to showcase efforts by non-state actors in partnership with civil society.

▤ Measurement and reporting

The current status of available data for SDG implementation, including disaggregated data, is not articulated in the report. According to the report, a SDG data platform has been established that provides data on SDG indicators and information on the status of data collection. Aside from the SDG data platform, the report provides no further information on Australia's plans to report on the 2030 Agenda domestically or at future High-level Political Forums.

Bahamas

In 2018, the Bahamas 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 Bahamas Government is in the process of establishing a Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Inter-Agency Technical Committee, with membership from government ministries and agencies, the private sector, civil society and academia. However, the report mentions that the country neither has a legislative framework for civil society development nor a formal policy on Civil Society engagement in 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development implementation.

Stakeholder engagement

Although the report notes that the government has worked in collaboration with civil society, academia and the private sector and highlights academia involvement in a 2030 Agenda communication strategy, there is no further information on consultation during the VNR processes.

Policies

Baseline or gap analysis

No gap analysis or baseline study was carried out, but the report includes a mention to a planned capacity assessment of government ministries, departments, agencies and corporations to determine resource gaps for SDG implementation. A financial shortfall for funding SDGs implementation at the national level is also repeatedly highlighted.

Incorporating the SDGs

The government reported that it has incorporated the SDGs into national policies through its 25-year National Development Plan entitled Vision 2040, which was aligned to the 2030 Agenda, ensuring that the SDGs have been localised into its national development planning process and providing a roadmap for their implementation at national level. Nevertheless, the report lacks mentions to core principles of the 2030 Agenda, namely

human rights-based approach, universality and inter-generational responsibility. Environmental issues are presented without consideration of them as planetary boundaries. On the opposite, leave no one behind is pointed out as a critical principle to ensure achievement of the SDGs in the Bahamas.

Nationalising the 2030 Agenda

The VNR report identifies six "priority areas" in SDGs implementation (1. Transparency, Accountability and Effectiveness in Government; 2. A Healthy, Productive Workforce for a Modern World; 3. Enduring Citizen Security; 4. Community Revitalisation; 5. Inclusive Economic Growth through Empowerment, Business Climate Improvement and Diversification; 6. A Sustainable and Resilient Environment) and 74 global SDG targets. A list of national priority targets is included as part of each SDG analysis.

Integration and policy coherence

The report covers all 17 SDGs, providing only a summary examination of goals, targets and indicators and showing limited information on progress. The main part of each SDG analysis is linked to introducing key governmental interventions aimed at its implementation. Challenges ahead are identified for each goal, but only in a general way.

Though the goals analysis presents limited references to linkages between economic, social and environmental dimensions, all three dimensions are addressed, but biased towards the economic one. Nevertheless, the Paris Agreement is explicitly linked to the SDGs. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda is not mentioned in the report. Policy coherence for sustainable development is addressed only under SDG 17 on partnerships for the goals, however, in a siloed approach.

Means of implementation

Implementing the 2030 Agenda

The Bahamas National Development Plan identified and prioritised accelerators, understood as programs and actions that are a means of 'jump starting' the national implementation process, linked to

broad priority areas that are subsumed in the SDGs. At the same time, the Bahamas recognises that to achieve the SDGs, the country will need stronger institutions and access to increased resources.

The need for financial resources is considered critical to implement the SDGs, and the 2007-2008 financial crisis is mentioned as a systemic issue that adversely impacted vital sectors of the national economy. National public resources, foreign direct investment, and financial support from international financial institutions and development agencies are considered the primary sources for SDGs funding. However, the report notes national public financial constraints and highlights that the Bahamas has graduated from concessional financing and non-reimbursable financing due to its high per capita GDP.

Leave no one behind

The report includes a section dedicated to leaving no one behind. It mentions leaving no one behind in many instances but does not go into detail on existing inclusive approaches. With support from the United Nations Development Programme, the Government commissioned the production of a Thematic Report Ensuring Inclusive Development in the Bahamian Society which identifies and outlines the status and challenges experienced by those identified as marginalised. The report explicitly identifies persons living in poverty, persons living with disabilities, Family Island residents, the elderly, at-risk youth, youth who are falling behind academically, unemployed persons, migrants, children with obesity, single parents, women, and men with criminal records as vulnerable groups.

Awareness raising and localisation

The report mentions that through an integrated Communications Strategy prepared by the University of The Bahamas as part of the United Nations Development Programme technical cooperation grant, the government will continue to educate and inform the public about the 2030 Agenda. The need for enhancing the awareness of the SDGs is recognised as part of an inclusive approach, aimed to promote widespread acceptance and appropriate application of the 2030 Agenda implementation strategies, public policies and programmes in the long term.

The VNR report mentions that the government has ensured that the 2030 Agenda has been localised into its national development planning process but provides no further details.

Partnership to realise the SDGs

The report mentions a limited number of initiatives fostered by the private sector, civil society or academia, addressed in a general manner. The main references to partners are related to the United Nations System and the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. Measurement and reporting

> **GOOD PRACTICE SPOTLIGHT**
> **Nassau is an economically depressed area characterised by high unemployment levels, high crime rates, low income and infrastructure dilapidation.**
>
> **The Bahamas government, in partnership with civil society, academia and the private sector, has developed a pilot project, Over the Hill, for a comprehensive poverty alleviation strategy focusing on social and economic empowerment, rejuvenation, smart and green technology, and programmes which focus on youth and the elderly.**

Currently, SDG data is collected by the Department of Statistics as part of its mandate to produce social and economic data. The government has conducted a review to determine data availability of tier 1 indicators and current capacity gaps, focusing on the availability of disaggregated data. Special attention was given to identify existing or potential partnerships that could be developed to support national data availability.

As a result, the Bahamas identified that the country faces a data gap based on inadequate information for following-up SDGs indicators, insufficient data disaggregation, and lack of the necessary human resources and infrastructure. To further strengthen the production of high quality data and monitoring capacity, the government has embarked on an initiative to strengthen its national statistical capacity and develop a national statistical system. It is also considering to establish a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework and review process for the implementation of the National Development Plan, that could work as a secondary monitoring checkpoint on the 2030 Agenda national implementation progress.

Bahrain

In 2018, Bahrain 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

Bahrain has established the National Information Committee led by the Ministry of State for Follow-up Affairs and with the membership of different, relevant government institutions. The committee, responsible for following-up the development agenda and linking it to the government work programme, is supported by the national information system and e-government.

Bahrain is engaging on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the regional level. It hosted the second session of Arab Sustainable Development Forum and represented the Gulf Cooperation Council States in efforts to define the global Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicators.

Stakeholder engagement

Non-state actors' official engagement in SDG implementation is not articulated in the report. The government organised a series of three workshops that brought together civil society, the private sector, academia, parliament and interested individuals to share results on implementation and in preparation of the report. The report does not mention the nature of the contributions made by consulted stakeholders.

Civil society validity check

Information received from members of the Arab Non-Government Organisation Network for Development in Bahrain highlighted that national consultations failed to provide an occasion to incorporate views of civil society organisations on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.

Policies

Baseline or gap analysis

Government institutions and others assessed the SDGs in relation to their mission and activities. The assessment looked at the relevance of the SDGs and their targets for Bahrain, including in terms of the extent to which progress is underway and where challenges exist. Baselines were established in relation to the targets of the government's 2015–18 programme (which, according to the report, aligns with the SDGs).

GOOD PRACTICE SPOTLIGHT
Thanks to the role played by the National Commission of Information and the availability of data through the government's activity-monitoring system, Bahrain was able to set-up a database on the SDGs, gathering targets and indicators.

Incorporating the SDGs

Bahrain does not have a specific action plan for the 2030 Agenda. The report tends to refer more to how existing policies are aligned with the SDGs, rather than how they have been incorporated into policies. Bahrain has developed a frame for monitoring and reporting based on its economic strategy, Vision 2030, which was designed in 2008. A government programme also exists for 2015–18 that aligns with the SDG targets. The report reflects the domains of priority by recognising the sustainable development pillars and principles.

Nationalising the 2030 Agenda

Under the United Nations' The World We Want campaign, more than 6,000 Bahrainis identified their four main concerns for the 2030 Agenda, including high-quality education, decent work opportunities, better health care and protection against crime and violence. According to the report, ownership over the 2030 Agenda is high, and can be seen in the development of relevant laws, follow-up institutional mechanisms and the adaptation of the government programme 2015–18 to the SDGs.

The report sets out six priorities in terms of Bahrain's adaptation of the 2030 Agenda. These include cities, housing and urban development; environmental challenges; population and social services; education, scientific research and the values of productive work and citizenship; economic growth and diversification, sustainability and institutional change; and peace and security, including partnership and regional integration. Bahrain has selected national targets, adapting 78% of the global SDG targets according to the report.

⚙ Integration and policy coherence

The report does not provide a goal-by-goal analysis but rather focusses on people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnership based on country priorities. Nevertheless, all SDGs were discussed in the report, but not in equal depth. The environmental dimension of sustainable development was primarily analysed, with attention to links with social, economic and political dimensions.

The report does not refer to policy coherence for sustainable development but includes several efforts to ensure coherence across different goal areas. The report explicitly links climate change and the Paris Agreement on climate change to the SDGs.

Means of implementation

⟳ Implementing the 2030 Agenda

For Bahrain, implementing the 2030 Agenda in a context of climate change requires a transfer to and national appropriation of adequate green technologies, mobilisation of necessary resources and raising societal awareness.

It also means sustainability of a thriving economy to ensure an attractive investment climate, and rewarding as well as equitable employment opportunities for citizens.

The report identifies the "fight against extremism, terrorism and conflict to ensure the unity and connection of the Bahraini people and the preservation of national unity" (pp. 5–6) as a main challenge for the political and governance environment.

✋ Leave no one behind

According to the report, development in Bahrain has excluded no one and there are no marginalised people due to the level of social services provided by the government. Nevertheless, the report does note challenges for migrant workers. It highlights the availability of detailed data and indicators by sex, age, place of birth, standard of living, and nature and level of disability. This facilitates the identification of gaps and social groups with specific difficulties,

notably migrant workers in low-income occupations. Specialised programmes exist to support specific groups. For example, Bahrain reported on its efforts to cancel the Kafala (sponsorship) procedure for migrant workers.

((•)) Awareness raising and localisation

The National Commission of Information created a working group on communication. A 2030 Agenda communication digital platform is under construction and will include plans and actions by all levels of government, companies, and civil society. The platform will provide a way to mobilise media and all channels of communication in a consistent manner.

Examples of local implementation are rarely mentioned in the report and without specific articulation or detailed evidence.

✪ Partnership to realise the SDGs

The report refers to the support provided by the United Nations agencies to carry out to VNR. Bahrain recognises the importance of international partnership to address gaps and assist in 2030 Agenda implementation. The report emphasises "solidarity of the international community with Bahrain by supporting stability and security" as a necessity to increase the level of human development and ensuring human welfare (p. 8). The report does not address parliamentarians, civil society or academics with regard to multi-stakeholder implementation efforts. It does note some efforts by the private sector to integrate sustainable development into strategic priorities and highlights a limited number of specific initiatives.

📋 Measurement and reporting

The National Statistics Unit and e-government are the two mechanisms responsible for monitoring sustainable development indicators and coordinating data production, including disaggregated data.

The report does not provide information on the current status of data availability, efforts to improve data availability or national reporting on 2030 Agenda implementation.

Benin

In 2018, Benin submitted its second voluntary national review (VNR) report to the United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF). It previously reported to the HLPF in 2017.

Governance and institutional mechanisms

Leadership, governance and institutions

Since 2018, Benin has put in place a coordination and monitoring-evaluation mechanism to ensure that Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) priority targets are taken into account in the country's planning system at both national and sectoral levels. In this context, it has established a Steering Committee (Comité d'Orientation), chaired by the Minister of State for Planning and Development and mandated to examine and report on SDG implementation at the national and sectoral levels. Benin has also established a Technical Steering Committee (Comité technique de pilotage) that operationalises guidance given by the Steering Committee.

Both the Steering Committee and the Technical Steering Committees are multi-stakeholders in nature, and the country has a framework for consultation of civil society organisations (Cadre de concertation des Organisations de la Société Civile), detailed below.

Stakeholder engagement

Benin established the framework for consultation of civil society organizations in September 2017 to serve as a forum for multi-stakeholder dialogue around the operationalisation, monitoring and evaluation of the SDGs. The framework is composed of four thematic groups (social, economic, environmental and institutional working groups) and the secretariat of each group is provided by a representative of the federal government (General Directorate for the Coordination of the SDGs.)

According to the report, stakeholders were engaged in the identification of national priorities, and in the report's preparation.

Policies

Baseline or gap analysis

According to the VNR report, an integrated rapid assessment found that a significant number of SDG targets were being addressed by national and sectoral development strategies, but an assessment of the alignment of Annual Work Plans of Ministries with the SDGs found that departments and ministries need to better align their actions with SDG 1 on no poverty, SDG 2 on zero hunger, SDG 5 on gender equality, SDG 10 on reduced inequalities and SDG 13 on climate action.

The report shows gaps at the national level across the SDGs, such as an increase in the poverty rate, which is mainly rural, from 36.19% to 40.08% from 2011–15, ongoing food insecurity, insufficient access to drinking water, and significant land degradation with 66% of the national territory degraded, but to varying degrees, affecting Benin's agro-ecological zones. The report also assesses progress and outlines gaps at the local level.

Incorporating the SDGs

The report notes that the SDGs have been integrated into the 2018-25 National Development Plan and the Growth Programme for Sustainable Development that operationalises the national plan. The Government's Action Programme 2016-2021 and Ministries' Annual Work Plans are also aligned with the SDGs. In addition, the government adopted a roadmap linked to the National Development Plan, which will operationalise the SDGs.

The report includes a dedicated chapter on leaving no one behind and the concept is also referred to throughout the report.

Nationalising the 2030 Agenda

Per the VNR report, Benin has prioritised a set of 49 targets that cover the 17 SDGs, in addition to targets related to means of implementation for SDGs 1 to 16 and targets related to SDG 17. Benin has selected 168 indicators related to the priority targets.

⚙ Integration and policy coherence

The VNR report provides a summary assessment of progress and outlines commitments for the SDGs examined in-depth during the 2018 HLPF. It also assesses SDG 1 on no poverty, SDG 2 on zero hunger and SDG 13 on climate action, and links SDG implementation to the Paris Agreement on climate change, and to the Addis Ababa Action agenda. The report does not mention policy coherence for sustainable development, but refers to initiatives carried out to improve institutional coherence towards the SDGs, namely the use of an application (MeSODD) to assess the level of alignment between each ministry's activities and the SDGs.

GOOD PRACTICE SPOTLIGHT
In Benin, the MeSODD application was used to measure the relative "sensitivity of ministries' annual interventions" regarding the SDGs. The app focuses attention on actions that could lead to inter-sectoral synergies for achieving the SDGs, and outlines comprehensive, collaborative and specific measures that should be followed by ministries to make progress on the SDGs. The application revealed that all the 17 SDGs were addressed by at least four sectoral ministries, and nine SDGs were addressed by activities planned in the Annual Work Plans of at least ten sectoral ministries. The exercise thus revealed a significant need for coordination between ministries.

Means of implementation
🖳 Implementing the 2030 Agenda

Benin refers to capacity development in several sections of the report, and notes that it is considering strengthening the statistical information system and capacities of human resources in charge of the implementation and coordination of development agendas. On budgeting for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Benin is planning to develop an online application (app) that will serve as an analytical framework for accurately assessing the proportion of budgetary resources devoted to achieving the SDGs within the government. On financing, the report indicates that the country launched a process for costing priority SDG targets, and plans to develop a resource mobilisation strategy that will focus on domestic resource mobilisation, innovative financing, and development cooperation as a "catalytic contribution."

✋ Leave no one behind

Per the report, leaving no one behind in Benin includes all populations and all social levels, especially the most disadvantaged, the vulnerable and those most exposed to climate, economic or financial hazards. The country has adopted new special programmes, such as the insurance for strengthening human capital (Assurance pour le Renforcement du Capital Humain - ARCH), which seeks to ensure financial support to the poorest sections of the agricultural, trade, transport, craft, art and culture sectors, and to unemployed poor people. In 2017, Benin also adopted the Law on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and is implementing a pilot "social safety nets" programme targeting public interventions for the most disadvantaged, vulnerable or chronically vulnerable segments of the society.

The report does not include many references to gender equality, except in the context of facilitating access to land for the poorest, especially women.

📡 Awareness raising and localisation

According to the report, the government organised, in 2018, approximately ten national workshops, involving nearly 300 different actors over a period of five months to mobilise people around sustainable development commitments in Benin.

On localising the SDGs, a benchmarking process in 15 municipalities and a process of capitalising on experiences in 22 municipalities was carried out to assess the implementation of the SDGs at the local level. The government organised technical workshops to support and train municipalities, in ten departments of the country, on integrating the SDGs into local development planning documents. The country also established the Joint Community-Government Coordination Framework on the SDGs (Cadre de coordination Commune-Gouvernement sur les ODD) where mayors and officials involved in the national coordination of the SDGs examine SDG implementation in municipalities.

🔗 Partnership to realise the SDGs

The report notes that the country has carried out a mapping of technical and financial partners' interventions for SDG implementation, finding that all SDGs benefited from technical and financial partners' interventions, but the level of intervention varies according to the SDG. The report does not provide information on other non-state actor partnerships and contributions.

Measurement and reporting

The report mentions that only 49% of Benin's 168 priority indicators were available in 2017. The country is considering strengthening the statistical information system (planning, monitoring and evaluation) as part of its upcoming activities for SDG implementation, but the report does not provide additional details on this initiative.

Benin has established a system of SDG reporting at the national level. The Technical Steering Committee reports periodically to the Steering Committee on progress related to SDG implementation. The Chair of the Steering Committee (Minister of State for Planning and Development) then reports to the Head of State in the Council of Ministers and receives instructions from the latter on how to improve the monitoring and evaluation of SDG implementation. A progress report on SDG implementation and monitoring is also drafted yearly by the Secretariat of the Technical Steering Committee.

Bhutan

In 2018, Bhutan 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

Bhutan's Gross National Happiness Commission serves as the High Level Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Committee. It is chaired by the prime minister and includes representation at the secretary level. The Commission is supported by a secretariat that is the main agency for planning and coordination of the country's socio-economic programmes. A SDG working committee was established to oversee the integration of the SDGs, implementation and report on progress. The VNR report does not mention formal inclusion of non-state actors in the SDG implementation institutional structures.

Stakeholder engagement

The report does not outline the process for engagement by non-state actors in SDG implementation. A civil society report confirms that consultations on national priorities for 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development implementation and the VNR report occurred, however it makes no reference to a process for ongoing engagement.

Policies

Baseline or gap analysis

According to the report, Bhutan examined policies and data availability to support the SDGs. The assessment examined alignment between SDG targets and Bhutan's policy frameworks, including with respect to the country's National Key Results Areas. The assessment showed a high degree of integration. With respect to data, the country examined alignment of the SDG indicators and data availability, finding that data is mostly available for social sectors but not for indicators related to energy, infrastructure and governance. The VNR report includes an assessment of the status of SDG implementation for each goal in terms of whether the country has achieved the goal, is on track to achieve the goal, or reaching the goal is at risk.

GOOD PRACTICE SPOTLIGHT
Bhutan conducted a Vulnerability Baseline Assessment in 2016 to understand who is being left behind and at risk of being left behind. The country identified 14 groups as at risk of being left behind and plans to use the assessment to inform its efforts going forward.

Incorporating the SDGs

According to the report, three SDGs were prioritised in the country's 11th Five Year Plan – SDG 1 on no poverty, SDG 13 on climate action and SDG 15 on life on land. At the time of the VNR, the country was in the process of preparing its 12th Five Year Plan (2018–23), which is set to further integrate the SDGs. In addition, the country's National Key Results Areas and Key Performance Indicators are strongly aligned with the SDGs, and will be further integrated at agency and local government levels. The report makes reference to the universal nature of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and efforts to leave no one behind. The human rights-based approach is referenced in relation to the role of civil society organisations in promoting the 2030 Agenda but not in relation to the overall agenda. The report does not refer to environment-related principles of the 2030 Agenda, though it has a strong focus on the environment given the country's stated SDG priorities.

Nationalising the 2030 Agenda

A nation-wide survey was also conducted to understand citizens' expectations and priorities for 2030 Agenda implementation by the government. The report notes the following SDG priorities: SDG 1 on no poverty, SDG 13 on climate action and SDG 15 on life on land.

✿ Integration and policy coherence

The report examines all 17 SDGs and gives equal attention to the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. The report is particularly strong in terms of making references to applicable linkages between the dimensions of sustainable development in the goal-by-goal analysis, particularly as the government sees climate change as the single greatest threat to its development progress. The report does not mention policy coherence for sustainable development but does refer to the impact of Bhutan's domestic policies on the realisation of the goals globally in terms of its contributions to climate change and environmental sustainability.

Means of implementation
⟲ Implementing the 2030 Agenda

According to the report, Bhutan faces a number of challenges for 2030 Agenda implementation. These include harmonising policies, improving data and statistics management, raising awareness of the SDGs, preparing financing strategies, and improving stakeholder coordination. In terms of the goal-related challenges, the report notes the need for Bhutan to achieve economic diversification, realise last mile poverty reduction, improve the quality of education, address the rise in non-communicable diseases and continue to see development progress in light of the threats presented by climate change. In terms of the means of implementation, the report highlights the challenge of declining official development assistance in light of Bhutan's expected graduation from least developed country status in 2023. The report does not note specific budgeting for the SDGs, but rather that since the SDGs are highly connected to existing policies and plans, the resources allocated to existing plans are seen as SDG financing. Nevertheless, the country plans to prepare a costing for SDG implementation.

✋ Leave no one behind

Bhutan requires additional data to meet the commitment to leave no one behind. Based on an assessment of vulnerabilities, the report identifies 14 vulnerable groups in Bhutan including the elderly in need of support, orphans, people with disabilities, children in particular social situations, such as out of school children, and others. The report outlines a range of existing specialised programmes to leave no one behind and universal programmes, policies and regulations. The country is taking steps to "reach the last mile" in terms of poverty reduction and wants to bring multi-dimensional poverty reduction and income poverty to under 5% through targeted interventions.

⍜ Awareness raising and localisation

According to the report, the government carried out awareness-raising activities for civil society, the private sector, government institutions and parliamentarians. It also developed a communications strategy about the SDGs. The report notes that more efforts will be needed to raise awareness and capacities for further localisation of the agenda.

⤴ Partnership to realise the SDGs

The report places an emphasis on the role of all stakeholders in 2030 Agenda implementation. The country's 12th Five Year Plan has a focus on the "Triple C", which refers to coordination, consolidation and cooperation – or in other words, the role of communities, civil society and the private sector in contributing to sustainable development progress. The report does not highlight specific partnerships for these stakeholder groups. It does, however, note the important role of parliamentarian oversight in SDG implementation.

GOOD PRACTICE SPOTLIGHT
In 2017, the Bhutan National Assembly adopted a resolution to embed SDG oversight into parliamentary work, approving the creation of a standing committee to engage on the SDGs, allotting one day for SDG discussions per parliamentary session, affirming the role of parliament in ensuring the SDGs are effectively integrated into Bhutan's next five year plan and requiring parliamentarians that travel for SDG-related trips to report on their visits in plenary. The resolution also included a commitment to mobilise resources to facilitate the National Assembly's oversight role.

▤ Measurement and reporting

Bhutan carried out a data assessment in partnership with the United Nations. It found that data is available for 84 indicators and partially available for another 66, meaning the Bhutan has data for roughly 61% of the global SDG indicators. The report notes that efforts are needed to collect more disaggregated data. Improving the national statistics system will require strengthening related policies and legislation, improving coordination and strengthening human capacities. In addition to the role of national parliament, the report notes that monitoring and evaluation of the SDGs shall be harmonised the with country's existing systems. As noted above, the country is in the process of further integrating SDG indicators and targets into results areas and key performance indicators.

Cabo Verde

In 2018, Cabo Verde 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 is in the process of establishing a high-level implementation body that will include key government institutions, parliamentary representatives, municipalities, civil society, the private sector and academia. The body will be responsible for ensuring progress on the implementation of the national sustainable development strategy and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. A Technical Implementation Organization under the National Planning Directorate at the Ministry of Finance will support the implementation body. Currently, the National Planning Directorate at the Ministry of Finance is the focal point for Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) implementation.

Cabo Verde is active in engaging on the SDGs at the regional level and as a small island developing state. The report details efforts by the country to convene peer countries to discuss issues related to SDG implementation and to advocate internationally for the needs of small-island-developing states.

Stakeholder engagement

Stakeholder consultations on national priorities for 2030 Agenda implementation and the VNR report are detailed in the report. However, the report does not provide information on regular systems for stakeholder consultation beyond engagement in governance mechanisms for 2030 Agenda implementation.

Policies

Baseline or gap analysis

The report notes that an assessment of data availability was carried out for all SDGs. The assessment revealed that Cabo Verde has data for 66% of the global indicators.

Incorporating the SDGs

The government has incorporated the SDGs into its Sustainable Development Strategic Plan (2017–21). It is in the process of further integrating SDG targets and indicators into sector strategies and local plans. A road map for SDG implementation was prepared in 2016 however the VNR report notes that the road map requires updates in light of more recent policies. The report refers to the 2030 Agenda principles of leaving no one behind.

Nationalising the 2030 Agenda

The national sustainable development strategy sets out four priorities: 1. To create a circular economy; 2. Ensuring economic and environmental sustainability; 3. Ensuring social inclusion and addressing inequalities; and 4. Strengthening sovereignty, creating value in democracy and orienting diplomacy towards development challenges. As a next step, the report also notes the need to establish a SDG prioritisation report.

Integration and policy coherence

The report provides an overview of all 17 SDGs, providing equal attention to the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development, with references to linkages between goals. The report does not mention policy coherence for sustainable development, however, it makes linkages to the Paris Agreement on climate change, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.

Means of implementation

Implementing the 2030 Agenda

A number of challenges are outlined in the report for 2030 Agenda implementation. These include creating a favourable implementation environment and building an economy characterised by high and inclusive growth. Development finance is noted as one of the greatest challenges as the country graduated to middle income status in 2007 but is characterised by high levels of indebtedness. The report calls on the international community to continue to support small island states. Cabo Verde also requires support to

better identify and make use of innovative sources of finance for its sustainable development plans.

The report provides information on a range of sources to finance the SDGs, including domestic resources, official development assistance, South-South and triangular cooperation, foreign direct investment and remittances. It does not, however, provide a costing for SDG implementation or indicate if allocations for the 2030 Agenda have been incorporated into the budget.

Leave no one behind

The report has a strong focus on leaving no one behind and ensuring that SDG implementation works to meet the needs of the most vulnerable. Additional data will be required for Cabo Verde to leave no one behind. Nevertheless, the report identifies a range of groups at risk of being left behind: women, people living in absolute or extreme poverty, people with disabilities, LGBT communities, unemployed, elderly people, people with dependents without income and immigrants. The report details a range of existing specialised and universal programmes to support the most vulnerable and address regional disparities and inequality. One example highlighted in the report is the creation of a single social registry. The registry maps vulnerable families and works to monitor their situation. It is the single reference used for social transfers. A national care system has also been developed to transfer incomes to elderly people and vulnerable people. Over the past 15 years, the country has seen a reduction in consumption expenditure inequality.

Awareness raising and localisation

The report details a range of efforts to raise awareness and consult on the SDGs including through in-person and online activities. The government plans to organise a "road show" to further increase awareness of the SDGs across the country's islands.

The report has a strong emphasis on localising the SDGs, particularly in terms of leaving no one behind. A platform program has been developed to create local platforms to ensure implementation of national policies at the local level. There is a need to build capacities (including financial) for SDG implementation at the local level.

Partnership to realise the SDGs

While the report emphasizes the role of all stakeholders in implementing the 2030 Agenda, it provides very few examples of partnerships with non-state actors. Efforts by civil society and academia are noted with respect to conservation efforts. The role of civil society organisations in delivering social services is also noted.

Measurement and reporting

According to an assessment by the national statistics office, 66% of the global SDG indicators are available. There is a need to improve the availability of disaggregated data, though the report does not provide details in terms of where gaps exist. The report calls on the international community to support the country's efforts to improve statistical capacity, particularly through the implementation of 2017–21 National Strategy for the Development of Statistics.

The report does not provide details regarding national reporting on the 2030 Agenda or in relation to future High-level Political Forums. It does note, however, that the high-level body on 2030 Agenda implementation will have responsibility for preparing periodic implementation reports.

🍁 Canada

In 2018, Canada 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 Minister of Children, Families and Social Development is responsible for 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development implementation. A Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Unit has been established to coordinate, monitor and report on activities. The SDG Unit is also responsible for engagement with other levels of government, indigenous peoples and other non-state actors. The minister is supported by six other ministers whose portfolios cover the economic, social and environmental dimensions of the 2030 Agenda.

Civil society validity check

According to a civil society report, Canada is not on track to meet the SDGs because the government has failed to establish governance, monitoring and reporting structures.

💬 Stakeholder engagement

The report does not provide information on a process for non-state actor engagement on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. It makes no reference to consultations in the identification of the SDG priorities listed in the report or in the preparation of the report.

Civil society validity check

The British Columbia Council for International Cooperation submitted a petition to Canada's Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development asking for clarity on Canada's efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda. The petition found that there is no opportunity for consultation and input into the process through existing government processes. In addition, "the federal government declined the opportunity to co-create a VNR that incorporated civil society input in a meaningful way" (p. 10).

Policies

〰 Baseline or gap analysis

The report makes no reference to preparation of a gap or baseline analysis. Indeed, it notes that government institutions have been tasked with identifying gaps in relation to existing policies and programmes. Nevertheless, the report does offer a full statistical annex which shows data for all SDG indicators (or proxy indicators) where available and provides baselines.

✅ Incorporating the SDGs

The Canadian government has yet to formally integrate the 2030 Agenda into its policies and plans. The report notes that Canada's policies are well aligned to the SDGs and that federal government institutions have been tasked with examining further how their policies and programmes contribute to the 2030 Agenda. As a next step, the government plans to prepare a national implementation strategy in collaboration with all levels of government, indigenous peoples, civil society and the private sector. The report does not refer to the human rights-based nature of the 2030 Agenda but does note that Canada's approach to foreign assistance is human rights based. The report also has a prominent focus on leaving no one behind.

⦿ Nationalising the 2030 Agenda

Notwithstanding the government's plan to establish a strategy for SDG implementation, the report notes that Canada's priorities include eliminating poverty, advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, growing the economy and narrowing the socio-economic gaps, advancing self-determination and improving relationships with indigenous peoples, fostering inclusion, and advancing action on climate change and clean growth. The government plans to define national indicators for SDG implementation going forward.

⚙ Integration and policy coherence

The report examines all 17 SDGs and has an exceptionally strong focus on the inter-linkages between the three dimensions of sustainable development. The report provides an assessment of Canada's domestic and international efforts to realise the SDGs in

the goal-by-goal analysis. The report also covers the contributions of domestic policies in energy and regarding life on land to the goals internationally. The report refers to most relevant international agreements: the Paris Agreement on climate change, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.

Means of implementation
Implementing the 2030 Agenda
The report refers to Canada's contributions globally with respect to 2030 Agenda implementation, noting its contributions through a progressive trade agenda, foreign assistance, capacity development and technology. There is no information regarding how the 2030 Agenda has been incorporated into budgets, costing and sources of finance for domestic implementation.

Leave no one behind
The report has a strong focus on leaving no one behind. There is a dedicated chapter and the goal-by-goal analysis either includes a dedicated section on leaving no on behind or incorporates the key issues facing those left behind in the broader analysis. While Canada has excellent data to leave no on behind, the report includes a commitment by the government to go further in terms of producing disaggregated data through the creation of the Centre for Gender, Diversity and Inclusion Statistics which will address disaggregated data gaps on gender, race and other intersecting identities. The report notes that the following groups are being left behind: indigenous peoples, women, LGBTQ2 communities, newcomers, people with disabilities, single people age 45–64 and lone parents who are more likely to live in poverty, and persons with disabilities. The report outlines a wide range of universal programmes such as progressive taxation and employment insurance as well as new and existing specialised programmes that target those left behind. Canada has a strong focus on gender equality in its implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The report details efforts related to its Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA+) approach which includes an assessment of policies and plans in terms of their impact on gender equality as well as vulnerable groups, and provides a basis for gender-based budgeting. In addition, the report presents figures on progress made where available, including in terms of reducing inequality.

GOOD PRACTICE SPOTLIGHT
Canada's VNR report has a significant focus on leaving no one behind. It provides a frank assessment of the situation for those being left behind, how the government is responding and where it can do better. The inclusion of a chapter on leaving no one behind as well as an emphasis in the goal-by-goal analysis is an example of good practice in VNR reporting.

Awareness raising and localisation
The report does not provide information on the government's efforts to raise awareness of the SDGs, though it does note that the SDG Unit will have responsibility for this going forward.

The report provides limited information on how the 2030 Agenda is being localised though it does showcase the efforts of some provincial and territorial governments as well as municipalities that contribute to the 2030 Agenda.

Partnership to realise the SDGs
The report highlights the importance of all stakeholders in 2030 Agenda implementation, and provides examples of contributions from provincial and territorial governments, municipalities, civil society, academia and the private sector. The role of parliament is not mentioned.

Measurement and reporting
Canada's VNR report provides a full statistical annex that shows that the country is well positioned to report on the global SDG indicators, including through the use of proxy indicators in some instances. As noted above, the report highlights efforts to improve the availability of disaggregated data. In terms of reporting, the report notes the SDG Unit is responsible but does not lay out specifics in terms of substance of reporting and frequency. It also notes that a Sustainable Development Goals Data Hub was launched in 2018 which serves as the online resource for information on Canada's progress.

Colombia

In 2018, Colombia submitted its second voluntary national review (VNR) report to the United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. Its previous presentation took place in 2016.

Governance and institutional mechanisms

Leadership, governance and institutions

Colombia was the first country in the world to establish a national governance structure aimed to implement and follow-up the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the national level: a High-Level Inter-institutional Commission for the effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDGs Commission) was created in early 2015 as a governmental body for policy coordination. As of the 2018 report, non-government actors such as academia and civil society are not included in that body.

Stakeholder engagement

The 2016 Colombia VNR addressed stakeholder engagement as a relevant issue. However, the 2018 VNR neither includes references to an ongoing process for stakeholder engagement nor information on consultation with national stakeholders on SDG priorities. However, the VNR refers to consultations with multiple actors as part of the process for its building.

A civil society spotlight report was edited by a number of organisations, namely WWF, Transforma, the Nature Conservancy, Cepei, Red de Ciudades and KPMG.

Policies

Baseline or gap analysis

There are no references to baselines or gap analysis in the Colombia 2018 VNR report. However, the country reported in 2016 that Colombia's national development plan is based on a closing-gaps approach, identifying a data gap. In 2018, the report does not include further information, but in the text, the urban-rural gap is repeatedly mentioned.

Incorporating the SDGs

The government adopted the SDGs as a guideline for leading its national development efforts. To that end, the goals were integrated into the National Development Plan 2014–18, called "Todos por un Nuevo País", Territorial Development Plans, and public policies. A governance structure was established and, in 2018, the national government adopted a high-level policy guide called Strategy for SDGs implementation in Colombia.

The leave no one behind principle is considered as a cross-cutting issue, and the report includes indirect references to inter-generational responsibility. However, human rights-based and universality principles are not thoughtfully analysed.

Nationalising the 2030 Agenda

The report includes many references to setting up national priorities for 2030 Agenda implementation, but they are not specified.

Integration and policy coherence

The report provides a detailed examination of the 2018 High-level Political Forum thematic goals: SDG 6 on clean water and sanitation, SDG 7 on affordable and clean energy, SDG 11 on sustainable cities and communities, SDG 12 on responsible consumption and production, and SDG 15 on life on land. The report provides limited references to linkages between economic, social and environmental dimensions in its analysis and does not refer to policy coherence for sustainable development.

The report refers to the Paris Agreement on climate change, the Convention on Biological Diversity, and to the Addis Ababa Action Agenda as international agreements related to the 2030 Agenda implementation at national level.

Means of implementation
⟲ Implementing the 2030 Agenda

The report reflects good practices on community management for access to water and sanitation in rural zones, energy efficiency and the use of unconventional sources in non-interconnected zones, sustainability of cities, solid waste management, and income generation through forests protection.

Budgeting for the 2030 Agenda is one of the main issues analysed in the report. The National Planning Department developed a tool for tracking, collecting and systematising budget information, using data analytics to track, classify and quantify the resources that contribute to compliance with the SDGs for each source of public expenditure.

Several implementation challenges are also underlined, such as ensure SDGs and future National Development Plans, increase 2030 Agenda social ownership, launch new financing mechanisms for sustainable development, and continue innovating to advance in an accelerated way towards SDGs achievement.

✋ Leave no one behind

The report does not include a chapter on leaving no one behind but underlines the importance of ensuring progress for children, indigenous people, Afro-Colombians, peasants, mothers as head of household and population with scarce resources. The main approach to reach those left behind is based on universal social programmes.

Adopted in 2018, the Strategy for SDGs Implementation in Colombia, establishes a long-term vision based on the prioritisation of a set of indicators and targets to measure the country's achievements against the agenda, considering the principle of leaving no one behind. A memorandum of understanding was signed between the National Planning Department of Colombia and the United Nations Development Programme to hire a consultant on strengthening the gender agenda in the measurement of SDGs indicators. An exercise aimed to create a budgetary classifier that allows the identification of National General Budget lines associated with gender equity was also developed.

◉ Awareness raising and localisation

The 2016 Colombian VNR report stated that a working group on communications had been created within the national SDGs Commission, tasked with designing and implementing a pedagogical strategy of communication and mobilisation on the 2030 Agenda. The 2018 VNR, however, does not include references to awareness-raising activities. The report does not identify specific measures related to localising the 2030 Agenda, an issue that was part of its 2016 VNR.

⤵ Partnership to realise the SDGs

Civil society organisations, the private sector, academia and the United Nations Agencies in Colombia activities towards SDGs implementation are reflected in the report. The issue of local non-state actor participation in implementation was analysed in Colombia's 2016 VNR report.

Civil society validity check

The Colombian Civil Society Spotlight Report examines SDG implementation and follow-up in Colombia. The analysis includes relevant information and a strong focus on localisation of implementation, monitoring efforts and SDG integration. It does not contradict the national VNR report, but is much more critical, particularly on SDG 7 on affordable and clean energy and SDG 15 on life on land.

📋 Measurement and reporting

Regarding data, Colombia reported in 2016 a lack of information to follow-up on 16% of the indicators. No new information was added in the 2018 VNR report. However, the new report highlights that the national SDGs implementation strategy incorporates a statistical strengthening plan, and includes reference to initiatives undertaken in partnerships with the private sector and civil society to promote dialogues between public and private data, aimed to strengthen SDGs monitoring and follow-up processes at national and local levels.

Dominican Republic

In 2018, Dominican Republic 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

An institutional architecture coordinated by a High-level Inter-Institutional Commission for Sustainable Development has been launched, including non-government actors, such as private companies, academia, local governments, civil society and the legislative branch. The main political responsibility for guiding the Inter-institutional Commission was assigned to the national Minister of Economy, Planning and Development. Even though the Dominican Republic presents itself as part of the Small Island Developing States and the Least Developed Countries groups, there is no identification of activities carried-out within those groupings.

Stakeholder engagement

The VNR report does not outline a process for regular stakeholder engagement on 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development implementation. It reports that in the process of writing the VNR report, consultations were held with civil society organisations, private sector organisations and companies, actors of the academy, local governments and parliamentarians. Meetings were also held with officials of the agencies of the United Nations System in the country.

A civil society report was prepared by Alianza ONG, a multisectoral network of 35 non-profit organisations, with the support of the Civil Society Organisations Alliance for Development Effectiveness.

Policies

Baseline or gap analysis

No assessment was carried out on baselines or gaps analysis. The report makes general references to existing gaps but does not identify concrete divides, contents, areas or groups involved.

Incorporating the SDGs

The government of the Dominican Republic has incorporated the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into national policies and frameworks through the use of a National Development Strategy, also considered as the national strategy for SDGs implementation.

The report identifies institutional advances, efforts regarding statistical improvement for the SDGs follow-up, steps to be taken with the aim of closing gaps in access to technologies, and vulnerable groups-oriented policies.

The principles of leaving no one behind and universality are considered in the VNR report. Environmental issues are referred to but not as planetary boundaries. Inter-generational responsibility is only taken into account by the report while analysing SDG 12 on responsible consumption and production.

Nationalising the 2030 Agenda

To date, the country has not established SDGs implementation priorities, but the government has built a proposal of priorities based on its National Development Strategy that was submitted to consultation with interested national actors and the United Nations System offices at the Dominican Republic.

Integration and policy coherence

The report provides a summary examination of all SDGs with equal attention to economic, social and environmental dimensions and limited reference to fitting linkages between dimensions. There are no references to policy coherence for sustainable development even when climate change and the Paris Agreement on climate change, the Convention on Biological Diversity, and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction are explicitly linked to the SDGs implementation at the national level.

Means of implementation

Implementing the 2030 Agenda

The report presents neither best practices nor lessons learned in implementing the SDGs nationally and refers to some means of implementation such as capacities development, systemic issues, national and international financing, and trade. The following negative impacts are highlighted: the financial world crisis, the insufficiency of cooperation resources, the importance of remittances for its national economy and the need to order the current global migration processes so that they do not affect development.

Domestic resources are identified as the primary sources of financing the 2030 Agenda implementation process at the national level, particularly in advancing well-being-related goals and safeguarding natural resources.

Leave no one behind

The report identifies women, children, the elderly and migrants as those is facing the risk of being left behind and it underlines that additional data is required for better identification of possible vulnerable groups. Gender-disaggregated data availability is not consistent across the 17 SDGs analysis and the country does not have a specific law against discrimination or on gender equality. However, it has a Ministry of Women, with the responsibility of establishing standards and coordinating the execution of policies, plans and programs aimed at eradicating inequalities that affect women and to follow-up on commitments assumed by the country at the international level concerning gender equity and women's rights. Additionally, the National Development Strategy 2030 establishes as one of its specific objectives to build a culture of equality and fairness between men and women.

Awareness raising and localisation

In order to raise awareness and increase ownership of the SDGs, the government is seeking to generate greater dissemination and knowledge of the 2030 Agenda at all government levels, in the private sector and civil society. It is implementing a gradual process of mainstreaming goals and objectives in national development budgets and planning instruments. Moreover, the government plans to develop a communication strategy and to include contents linked to the 2030 Agenda in higher education programs.

Civil society validity check

The Dominican Republic parallel report briefly analyses the High-level Political Forum theme goals for 2018. It does not show contradictions with the government VNR report, but points out weaknesses in each of the SDGs that do not appear in the national VNR report. It highlights that 57.5% of the consulted civil society organisations did not know that the Dominican Republic was going to present a VNR in 2018 and the limited knowledge of the population and civil society about the 2030 Agenda implementation process. The report recommends the development of an information system with a strengthened communication strategy, including the use of communication tools such as social networks and the inclusion of content on the 2030 Agenda in schools.

With respect to localisation, the VNR report only mentions that participation of local governments in the definition of national priorities and strategies related to the SDGs requires an appropriate institutional framework that ensures coherence between different government levels, and that successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda depends on the support of elected municipal authorities.

Partnership to realise the SDGs

There are references to efforts towards incorporating stakeholders such as civil society, the private sector, academia, local governments to the SDGs implementation and monitoring at national and local levels, but no specific measures to this end are identified. However, many examples of actions undertaken by non-state actors to achieve SDGs are underlined.

The United Nations system in the Dominican Republic supported the efforts made by the country to carry out its VNR.

GOOD PRACTICE SPOTLIGHT
The "Academy for the 2030 Agenda" agreement is an example of academy engagement in SDGs implementation. Pursuant to that agreement, signed by representatives of all the higher education institutions in the country, Dominican universities have committed themselves to contribute with the dissemination, research and inclusion of 2030 Agenda-related contents in their teaching programs and activities.

Measurement and reporting

There is information available to monitor 37% of the global SDG indicators. Improvements in existing sources are required for 19% of them, and the creation of new sources or significant changes in the existing sources is needed in another 45% of SDGs indicators. The country faces its main data availability shortcomings for SDGs related to the environment.

Ecuador

In 2018, Ecuador 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 Ecuador National Planning Secretariat coordinates the monitoring and evaluation mechanisms of the National Development Plan 2017–21 and is the main body responsible for monitoring and evaluating progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the country level. Non-state actor official engagement in SDG implementation governance arrangements is not addressed in the report.

💬 Stakeholder engagement

Formal processes for stakeholder engagement are not articulated in the report. However, the report refers to the critical role played by civil society, the private sector, academia, local governments and international partners to achieve the SDGs. Broad consultations with stakeholders were held in the VNR report-drafting process.

Policies

📉 Baseline or gap analysis

No assessment was carried out on baselines or gaps analysis. Nevertheless, some gaps are clearly identified while analysing each SDG in particular, such as rural-urban, income, gender and regional gaps. In addition, the country has carried out exercises to identify new data sources.

✅ Incorporating the SDGs

Ecuador has aligned its development policies with the SDGs. The Executive Decree 371, adopted in April 2018, makes the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development a national public policy, establishing guidelines for the articulation and collection of pertinent information and guiding the process of its alignment with national planning and development. As a result, the monitoring and evaluation mechanisms of the National Development Plan, called "Toda una vida", apply to the SDGs follow-up.

The report includes the leave no one behind principle as a cross-cutting issue and makes several references to the inter-generational responsibility arising from the sustainable development paradigm. It does not refer to planetary boundaries.

🌐 Nationalising the 2030 Agenda

Nine national SDG priorities have been set, namely: 1) guarantee a dignified life with equal opportunities, 2) affirm interculturality and plurinationality, 3) guarantee the rights of nature, 4) consolidate the social and solidary economic system sustainably, 5) promote productivity and competitiveness for sustainable economic growth in a redistributive and supportive manner, 6) develop productive and environmental capacities to achieve food sovereignty and integral rural development, 7) encourage a participatory society, 8) promote transparency and co-responsibility, and 9) guarantee sovereignty and peace, and strategically position the country in the region and the world. With the purpose of achieving the national goals, 19 "Emblematic Interventions" were established, however, they are not specified in the report.

⚙ Integration and policy coherence

The report provides a detailed examination of all the SDGs and most of their targets and indicators, giving equal attention to sustainable development economic, social and environmental dimensions, but providing a limited reference to linkages between them.

There are no references to policy coherence for sustainable development. The 2030 Agenda implementation process is linked to the Paris Agreement on climate change and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. Ecuador highlights national initiatives to fight against climate change in mobility and energy, risk management, resilience, adaptation, protection of biological diversity and the reduction of pollution areas. Ecuador considers nature as a rights holder, a legal entity constitutionally recognised and protected.

Means of implementation
⟲ Implementing the 2030 Agenda

The report identifies good practices carried out by different non-government actors in fields like renewable energy, awareness-raising, and accountability. It points out lessons learned on building long-term vision, SDGs-oriented planning and coordination of stakeholder efforts. Many implementation and follow-up challenges are identified for each SDG, without including general obstacles to the implementation process at the national level as a whole. Similarly, obstacles are not identified concerning the means of implementation included as part of each SDG analysis. During the 2018 General State Budget approval process, the funds allocated to SDG implementation were identified, showing that expenditures related to the SDGs represent 48.5% of the total budget amount.

✋ Leave no one behind

Leaving no one behind is only mentioned broadly as a fundamental 2030 Agenda principle. However, women, youth, people with disabilities, people in situations of mobility, indigenous people, Afro-descendants and future generations are pointed out as vulnerable groups within the report. Without including references to data availability focused on leaving no one behind, the report lists a series of existing specialised programmes aimed to support vulnerable groups at risk of being left behind, stating that advancing towards equity requires promoting social, economic and political integration of all, regardless of age, sex, disability, ethnicity, origin, religion, financial situation or other conditions.

📡 Awareness raising and localisation

The report does not include references to awareness-raising efforts carried out by the Ecuadorian government. The report highlights the participation of local governments as key actors to achieve the SDGs, underlining that some local governments have already begun their processes of aligning domestic policies to the SDGs.

❮❯ Partnership to realise the SDGs

The report points to broad participation of different non-state actors: civil society, the private sector, academia, international partners and United Nations agencies in Ecuador. Parliament involvement deserves special mention: in 2017, the National Assembly of Ecuador approved a binding resolution adopting the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs as a mandatory reference for its work and established a Parliamentary Group for the Eradication of Poverty and the fulfilment of the SDGs. The parliament also called for a forum aimed to debate SDG implementation challenges, and for a workshop on elements for drafting laws aimed to promote SDGs.

> **GOOD PRACTICE SPOTLIGHT**
> **The Telefónica Movistar Responsible Business Plan incorporates the SDGs into a series of programmes, considering them as a fundamental elements to guide the response to social, economic and environmental challenges.**

📋 Measurement and reporting

The National Institute of Statistics and Censuses of Ecuador formulated a statistical development plan as an instrument that seeks to identify, articulate and manage information in a systematic way. Currently, work is being done to generate SDGs-related quantitative information. Ecuador has data for 53% of global indicators.

Egypt

In 2018, Egypt 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 government established a National Committee for Monitoring the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Under the Prime Minister's Office, the committee includes representation from government institutions. According to the report, a number of ministries have also established sustainable development units, working groups and focal points. The Ministry of Planning, Monitoring and Administrative Reform operates as the rapporteur for the national committee. It is also the main government institution responsible for coordination and monitoring of Egypt's Vision 2030 strategy. The report does not outline how non-state actors participate in 2030 Agenda implementation structures.

Stakeholder engagement

The report does not set out how non-state actors are being engaged on 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development implementation on a regular basis. Nevertheless, the report outlines stakeholder consultations on the development of national priorities and in the VNR process. According to the report, Vision 2030 is the first long-term strategy that Egypt developed through a participatory, open and transparent approach that aimed to include all relevant stakeholders

Policies

Baseline or gap analysis

According to the report, Egypt's statistics unit has mapped the global SDG indicators and those used in Vision 2030. A statistical report on the SDG indicators was launched in 2018, and included classification of the SDG indicators in terms of data availability and methodological development (according to the tier system used by the United Nations).

Incorporating the SDGs

The Egyptian government has established Vision 2030 as the guiding framework for its national sustainable development priorities and implementation of the 2030 Agenda. A number of ministries have translated Vision 2030 into mid- and long-term strategies. The VNR report refers only to the 2030 Agenda principle of leaving no one behind.

Nationalising the 2030 Agenda

While national SDG priorities have been selected, as outlined in Vision 2030, the report does not provide information on what they entail. National indicators have also been established. In the goal-by-goal analysis, the report notes the indicators that are used for Vision 2030 and the SDGs (as well as those that are used only for the SDGs or Vision 2030).

Integration and policy coherence

The report provides a summary-level examination of all 17 SDGs, covering all dimensions of sustainable development with a greater focus on economic. The report does not cover the inter-linkages between the goal areas.

The report includes an assessment of the impact of Egypt's foreign policies on the goals internationally, notably in terms of peacekeeping efforts but does not reference policy coherence for sustainable development. The report refers to the Paris Agreement on climate change, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.

Means of implementation

Implementing the 2030 Agenda

The report highlights a lesson learned by Egypt from the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals. It notes the need to better collect data at the local level to ensure progress and better understand regional development disparities. The report notes that the Egyptian government can learn from the experiences

of other countries but is not specific in terms of priority areas for learning.

The report points to the need for technical assistance and capacity development, particularly in the area of strengthening evaluation units in government institutions. The report highlights official development assistance commitments by provider countries and notes the importance of opportunities presented by trade, particularly with China. A number of systemic concerns are listed that could impact Egypt's sustainable development, including global and regional economic instability, nearby conflicts, and regional struggles related to water resources.

✋ Leave no one behind

The report identifies the key groups in Egypt that are at risk of being left behind. These include: women, youth, people with disabilities, rural women, low income families and those impacted by regional disparities. More data is needed for Egypt to leave no one behind and the report rarely presents gender disaggregated data. Efforts to leave no one behind are guided by new and old specialised programmes such as conditional and unconditional cash transfer programmes with the number of beneficiaries of these programmes growing in recent years. The report is detailed in terms of outlining government initiatives.

In terms of promoting gender equality, the report highlights the establishment of a National Council for Women that was launched alongside the National Strategy for Women Empowerment 2030. "The strategy focuses on empowering women to accelerate the achievement of sustainable development, as well as promoting gender equality [… through …] four pillars: political empowerment and leadership; economic empowerment; social empowerment; [and] protection" (p. 8; see also p.32). The report includes a description of specific programmes supported in this context.

⊙ Awareness raising and localisation

According to the report, Egypt carried out consultations on the SDGs. The government also launched an application aimed at allowing citizens to participate in the process of reviewing Vision 2030.

There is very little information presented in the report on localisation, though it notes that an initiative has been launched to collect data at the governate level.

GOOD PRACTICE SPOTLIGHT
In 2018, two years after Vision 2030 was launched, the government carried out a review process to update the strategy. To engage citizens, and in particular youth, the Ministry of Planning, Monitoring and Administrative Reform launched an application called "Sharek" (participate) to serve as a digital platform for consultation. The application also served as a mechanism to raise awareness of sustainable development.

⤳ Partnership to realise the SDGs

In the report, the government recognises the importance of a multi-stakeholder approach to 2030 Agenda implementation. The report highlights examples of partnerships with civil society and the private sector, such as in the housing sector. Experts provided support for the development of the VNR report. The report also notes the role of youth, including the establishment of a Youth Sustainable Development Initiative that allows the government to liaise with youth representatives from universities across the country. With respect to development partners, the report notes that Egypt requires assistance to explore and make use of innovative sources of sustainable development finance such as green bonds.

🗒 Measurement and reporting

According to the report, Egypt has data for 45% of the global indicators. In this context, 35.7% of SDG indicators overall are classified as tier one (meaning that data is available, though not necessarily at needed levels of disaggregation). The country has roughly 87 indicators that are measurable and regularly updated. To improve data availability, the statistics unit is developing a strategy to update the national statistics system.

Egypt is making use of existing systems to monitor and evaluate progress towards the 2030 Agenda. For instance, the government's integrated electronic system links projects to Vision 2030 performance indicators. In addition to the statistics report launched in 2018, noted above, the government has also established an Egypt SDG Observatory working with United Nations Children's Fund that serves as a digital platform to track progress on the SDGs.

Greece

In 2018, Greece 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 report details a range of institutional mechanisms that contribute to implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The General Secretariat of the government's Office of Coordination, Institutional, International and European Affairs is the focal point for SDG implementation. The office is part of the Prime Minister's Office and leads an Inter-ministerial Coordination Network for the SDGs. A General Secretariat for Coordination also exists that plans, organises and monitors the implementation of government efforts and assists in instances where implementation is the co-responsibility of multiple government institutions. The report also notes the role of the Governmental Economic Policy Council and the Governmental Social Policy Council, overseen by the vice president of the government, which include representation by relevant ministries and contribute to SDG implementation in their respective areas.

The Office of Coordination, Institutional, International and European Affairs is expected to consult with non-state actors and raise awareness of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Stakeholder engagement

Greece has a formal mechanism for stakeholder engagement on the SDGs. The Economic and Social Committee of Greece is a constitutionally established institution that conducts social dialogue on general policies. The Committee includes employers, employees and other non-state actors and plays a role in facilitating structured dialogue on the 2030 Agenda. The report details participation by non-state actors in the selection of national priorities and the VNR process.

Policies

Baseline or gap analysis

According to the report, the government assessed all 17 SDGs through a stocktaking exercise on progress. "The mapping focused on identifying missing policy instruments, areas of insufficient action and areas for cross-sectoral co-operation to ensure policy coherence and spread good practice, both domestically and through the country's bilateral and international partnerships" (p. 10). The report presents the key gaps identified through the analysis of progress on the SDGs.

Incorporating the SDGs

The government has established eight priority areas for SDG implementation that are in line with the country's National Growth Strategy. In 2019, the government plans to prepare a National Implementation Plan for the SDGs through a participatory process.

The report makes reference to the principle of leaving no one behind but does not mention other 2030 Agenda principles.

Nationalising the 2030 Agenda

Greece's eight priorities for SDG implementation include:

- sustainable economic growth;
- full employment and decent work;
- addressing poverty and social exclusion;
- reducing social and regional inequalities;
- education;
- protection and sustainable management of natural resources;
- effective and accountable institutions; and
- democratic processes and partnerships.

The report links each national priority to specific SDGs.

⚙ Integration and policy coherence

The report covers eight thematic priorities identified by the country for SDG implementation. It does not include a goal-by-goal analysis per se, though the information provided is detailed and includes links to specific SDGs and specific SDG targets. The report covers all dimensions of sustainable development but has a greater focus on social dimensions, largely given the need for the country to focus on social inclusion in light of its recent experience with economic crises.

The report refers to policy coherence in terms of ensuring coherence horizontally across policy areas and vertically in terms of coherence from the national to the local level. The report refers to a wide range of relevant international agreements and consistently makes linkages to Greece's legal and voluntary commitments as they relate to progress on the SDGs.

Means of implementation
🖥 Implementing the 2030 Agenda

The report highlights Greece's whole-of-government approach to SDG implementation as a form of best practice. It does not detail lessons learned or where the country could learn from others.

In terms of means of implementation, the report notes sources of financing for the SDGs but does not present information on costing or incorporating the SDGs into national budgets.

✋ Leave no one behind

The report does not include a dedicated chapter on leaving no on behind. However, social inclusion is a prominent theme and the report provides detailed information on new and existing specialised programmes, as well as universal programmes such as a minimum guaranteed income that contribute to leaving no one behind. The key groups identified in terms of social inclusion initiatives include women, people with disabilities, migrants (refugees, asylum seekers, others), Roma and those impacted by regional disparities.

📡 Awareness raising and localisation

The report highlights the VNR as contributing to awareness raising on the 2030 Agenda as well as consultations, roundtables and other events. The Office of Coordination, Institutional, International and European Affairs is planning additional awareness-raising initiatives, including support for the Economic and Social Council, a body that represents non-state actors, and developing an online platform through which stakeholders can discuss the 2030 Agenda and share information and best practice.

Further efforts are needed to raise awareness of the 2030 Agenda at the local level, however, the report details a number of efforts by local governments that are contributing to the SDGs.

✪ Partnership to realise the SDGs

The report emphasizes Greece's whole-of-society approach to 2030 Agenda implementation. There is a detailed chapter on the contributions of local and regional governments, civil society, academia, the private sector and youth. A large number of specific examples are presented including awareness-raising activities, participation in policymaking, research initiatives, and projects and programmes. The report also notes the role of parliament in guiding SDG implementation and ensuring accountability for progress.

📋 Measurement and reporting

While the report includes a statistical annex, the status of data, including disaggregated data, to monitor progress on the SDGs is unclear. According to the report, the Hellenic Statistical Authority has conducted three rounds to identify indicators, however the results of these efforts are not presented.

Parliament is responsible for the overall follow-up process. It will review the planned, regular progress reports from the National Implementation Plan for the SDGs and VNR reports before they are presented at future United Nations High Level Political Forum.

Guinea

In 2018, 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

Ministries in charge of planning and cooperation are responsible for coordinating and monitoring Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) implementation. The Guinean government has set up an Institutional Monitoring and Evaluation Facility, whose mission is to facilitate dialogue with all stakeholders on the implementation of the National Economic and Social Development Plan 2016-20, and to serve as a monitoring mechanism for the SDGs.

The facility includes a consultation and coordination framework, a technical monitoring committee, eight thematic working groups, strategy and development offices of the ministries, and regional monitoring and evaluation units. The report notes that the consultation and coordination framework will serve as the National Working Group on the National Economic and Social Development Plan 2016-2020 and the SDGs. The thematic working groups will also play a key role in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the national level by considering social, economic, environmental, governance and partnership components, as well as cross-cutting areas such as data, awareness-raising, communication and financing. According to the report, Guinea plans to call upon non-state actors to actively contribute to the facility.

Stakeholder engagement

It is unclear if a process is in place to formally engage stakeholders in SDG implementation, and if they were involved in the preparation of the report. No civil society report was prepared for the review.

Policies

Baseline or gap analysis

Guinea examined its national planning documents, mainly its National Economic and Social Development Plan 2016-20, to determine the extent to which SDG targets have been taken into account. The report reveals that the plan covers mostly SDG 2

targets on zero hunger, followed by SDG 7 on affordable and clean energy and SDG 12 on responsible consumption and production. It provides a baseline for each of the 17 SDGs, outlining the need for progress on most SDGs.

Incorporating the SDGs

According to the report, Guinea has initiated a process of aligning its Vision for an Emerging Guinea by 2040 and its National Economic and Social Development Plan 2016-20 (the instrument for the five-year implementation of the Vision) with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The report refers to the following 2030 Agenda principles: universality, leave no one behind, and inter-generational responsibility (understood in terms of intergenerational equity).

Nationalising the 2030 Agenda

The report notes that 72 SDG targets were prioritised in the National Economic and Social Development Plan 2016-20, out of the 169 global targets. The annex of the report shows a list of national indicators for each SDG that seem to be aligned with the global SDG indicators.

Integration and policy coherence

The report covers all the SDGs. Policy coherence to sustainable development seems to be understood as "institutional coherence" within the government to deliver on its Vision 2040. It specifically links the SDGs to climate change and the Paris Agreement on climate change, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation.

Means of implementation

Implementing the 2030 Agenda

To help reach its national priorities and the SDGs, the government of Guinea decided to implement a capacity-building programme structured around institutional capacity building and development; human resources qualification and professionalisation; promotion of

partnerships for employment and empowerment; and support to the public sector, private sector and civil society.

Drawing lessons from the Ebola epidemic and aware of the risks of disasters related to extreme natural phenomena, the Guinean authorities, with the support of the technical and financial partners, have also set up a national capacity-building programme on resilience, risk reduction and disaster management.

Per the report, in 2017, the government of Guinea organised, a donor meeting (Advisory Group) which raised pledges of US $22 billion in funding to support the implementation of the National Economic and Social Development Plan 2016-20, the national framework to implement the SDGs. Implementation of the plan will be financed up to 30% by Guinea through the national budget, the report says. As part of the priority actions for the implementation of the SDGs in 2018, and within the framework of the national development plan, the report outlines reducing trade barriers across borders, developing trade in agricultural goods, and promoting trade in services.

Leave no one behind

The report targets poor and vulnerable populations, young people, women, children, and people with disabilities among those left behind.

As part of efforts made by Guinea to leave no one behind, in 2012, the country launched the Productive Social Nets project in collaboration with the World Bank to provide income support to vulnerable groups. The report indicates that in the same year, nearly 7,000 households received an unconditional cash transfer to be invested in income-generating activities, and 5076 households received payments in exchange for maintenance, sanitation and rehabilitation work in their locality. Guinea has also established a Social Development and Solidarity Fund for Women, Youth, Older Persons and the Disabled within the Ministry of Social Affairs, Women's Promotion and Children, and has adopted its first ever national social protection policy.

According to the report, several measures have been taken to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women, including the adoption of a national gender policy and of a strategic implementation plan, and the establishment of gender units in ministerial departments.

Awareness raising and localisation

Workshops to raise awareness on the SDGs in some regions of the country were organised in the context of the implementation of the National Economic and Social Development Plan 2016-20 and Vision 2040. The workshops sought to identify the best strategies for integrating the SDGs and fragility assessment outcomes into regional development plans and to collect proposals for the active participation of non-governmental organisations in the process of popularising and implementing the SDGs. They brought together, inter alia, participants from civil society organisations, the private sector and the United Nations Development Programme. Efforts to localise the 2030 Agenda are not articulated in the report.

Partnership to realise the SDGs

The report does not include a lot of information on partnerships to realise the SDGs. The United Nations Development Programme seems to have supported Guinea on various aspects of SDG implementation, including on the organisation of workshops to raise awareness on the SDGs in some regions of the country, and on data collection.

Measurement and reporting

The major constraint that hindered the process of developing the report was the availability, accessibility and quality of statistical data needed to analyse and monitor progress on the 2030 Agenda. To ensure better monitoring and evaluation of progress in the implementation of the National Economic and Social Development Plan 2016-20 and the achievement of the SDGs, the government plans to implement a series of measures, including: allocating financial and human resources to the national statistical system; producing fine and disaggregated data for monitoring the SDGs at national, regional and local levels; strengthening statistical coordination; ensuring the regularity of statistical production at the sectoral level; and expanding data dissemination, in particular in key economic sectors such as mining, trade, transport, tourism, industry, post and telecommunications, hotels and construction.

Hungary

In 2018, Hungary 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

All government institutions are responsible for implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. An inter-ministerial coordination mechanism was set up in 2017 to oversee domestic implementation of the 2030 Agenda while an Inter-Ministerial Coordinative Committee on International Development Cooperation is responsible for global contributions.

A platform has been set up to ensure engagement with non-state actors, however, the report does not provide significant details on how it operates. The report does note the role of the role of the National Council for Sustainable Development that was set up by parliament as a consultative and advisory body. The council includes 30 representatives from political parties, academia, the private sector, civil society organisations and church organisations.

> **Civil society validity check**
>
> According to the submission by civil society organisations that is included in the report, the National Council for Sustainable Development should be coupled with more active cooperation with non-state actors.

Stakeholder engagement

Beyond the National Council for Sustainable Development and the platform noted above, the report does not provide further details on ongoing stakeholder engagement in 2030 Agenda implementation. It does however, detail consultation with non-state actors in the development of the National Framework Strategy on Sustainable Development and the VNR.

> **Civil society validity check**
>
> Civil society organisations have called on the government to prioritise public participation in 2030 Agenda implementation. Public participation should be scaled up, assisted and supported through institutional and financial mechanisms, in line with SDG 17 on partnerships for the goals.

Policies
Baseline or gap analysis

Hungary assessed both policies and data with respect to 2030 Agenda implementation. The National Framework Strategy on Sustainable Development was assessed in terms of compliance with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Government institutions were also assessed in terms of responsibility for the goals. According to the report, the government identified data gaps and examined potential data owners to create a basic indicator list.

Incorporating the SDGs

Hungary adopted a National Framework Strategy on Sustainable Development in 2013 that covers the 2012–24 period. According to the report, the existing strategy aligns well with the SDGs. The report places a strong emphasis on the principles of the 2030 Agenda, and refers to its human rights-based nature, leaving no one behind, universality, inter-generational responsibility (understood in terms of the rights of future generations) and planetary boundaries.

Nationalising the 2030 Agenda

The National Framework Strategy on Sustainable Development focuses on health and demographic stability; sustainable culture including employment and values; biodiversity, protection of natural renewable resources and responsible management of non-renewable resources; entrepreneurial capital and innovation, employment, increasing capital investments and reducing foreign exposure.

Integration and policy coherence

The report covers all of the SDGs through a detailed analysis. While all dimensions of sustainable development are examined, the report tends to make limited references to the linkages between them in the goal-by-goal analysis. The report consistently refers to Hungary's existing legal and voluntary commitments as they relate to the SDGs (although it does not mention the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction or Addis Ababa Action Agenda). The report outlines the coordination mechanisms that have been established to ensure policy coherence for sustainable development within Hungary and externally.

> **GOOD PRACTICE SPOTLIGHT**
> **The report explicitly references a wide range of Hungary's national and international legal and voluntary commitments as they relate to each SDG. The analysis includes a discussion of how these commitments link to and support Hungary's overall approach to 2030 Agenda implementation.**

Means of implementation
Implementing the 2030 Agenda

The report highlights the Ombudsman for Future Generations as a best practice. Founded in 2008, the ombudsman advocates for the rights of future generations, serving as a deputy to the Parliamentary Commissioner for Fundamental Rights. The ombudsman considers issues related to the environment, mental and physical health and cultural heritage in relation to their impact on future generations.

The report notes that merging various initiatives related to sustainable development is a short-term challenge for Hungary.

The discussion on means of implementation focuses on Hungary's external contributions, notably in the areas of technology, capacity development and official development assistance, the latter of which Hungary aims to increase to 0.33% official development assistance to gross national income.

Leave no one behind

The main groups identified as vulnerable in the report include Roma people, people living in poverty, people in disadvantaged situations (untrained employees, employees under the age of 25 or over the age of 55, permanent job-seekers and parents with young children). The report does not provide information on the status of data to leave no one behind. It highlights a range of new and existing specialised programmes as well as universal programmes (such as laws and overarching policy frameworks) that support vulnerable groups. In the area of gender equality, there is a particular emphasis on enabling women to balance child care and career ambitions. Hungary has implemented a number of programmes that make it easier for women to re-enter the labour force after having a child or choose to stay home with children if that is preferred.

Awareness raising and localisation

As an initial step to raise awareness of the 2030 Agenda, the government translated the agenda into Hungarian.

The report does not cover how the 2030 Agenda has been translated to the local level.

Partnership to realise the SDGs

The report includes a full chapter featuring submissions from the national statistics office, the Office of the Ombudsman for Future Generations, the business sector, civil society and youth. The contributions highlight awareness-raising efforts by the business sector and civil society. The contribution from civil society provides recommendations on how the government should engage with and support civil society in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Measurement and reporting

The report notes that Hungary has approximately 75% of the global SDG indicators available. Since 2007, the national statistics office has published reports on progress for available indicators in relation to the National Framework Strategy for Sustainable Development biennially. An interactive website has also been established. Monitoring progress on the 2030 Agenda is the responsibility of the Office of the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights, linking it to existing human rights monitoring systems.

Ireland

In 2018, Ireland 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 Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment has overall responsibility for 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development implementation. All government departments have responsibility for implementation with each government minister responsible for individual Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets. Each SDG target was assigned to a minister to ensure ownership and clarity around responsibilities. Coordination occurs through a Senior Officials' Group on the SDGs comprised of assistant secretaries, chaired by the Department of the Taoiseach (Prime Minister). A SDG Interdepartmental Working Group also exists that has responsibility for developing national SDG-related policies, preparing VNR and other SDG reports, and establishing processes for stakeholder engagement. Non-state actors participate through a national SDG stakeholder forum that allows for ongoing engagement on national implementation. The forum includes civil society, the private sector, trade unions, the agricultural sector, youth, academia, the education sector, government institutions and the local government sector.

Civil society validity check

Coalition 2030, a civil society platform, argues that responsibility for SDG implementation should rest with the Prime Minister to provide strong leadership and ensure implementation across government institutions.

💬 Stakeholder engagement

The SDG Stakeholder Platform had its first meeting in June 2018. The forum provides an opportunity for stakeholders to discuss national implementation and reporting as well as share their experiences in implementing the SDGs. The forum offers a space to discuss challenges and share relevant information across sectors. Non-state actors participated in the section of national sustainable development priorities and the VNR. The report includes the summary from the VNR report validation workshop.

Civil society validity check

Non-state actors had little time to engage during the formulation of the SDG Implementation Plan and in advance of the VNR before the United Nations High-level Political Forum.

Policies

📈 Baseline or gap analysis

According to the report, the government assessed all 17 SDGs against its sectoral policies to identify linkages. The result of this process was a publicly available SDG Policy Map which outlines how relevant national policies link to the SDGs and notes responsible government departments according to SDG targets.

> **GOOD PRACTICE SPOTLIGHT**
> **Ireland has developed an SDG Policy Map that provides public information on responsible ministries for SDG implementation and associated supportive policies. This transparent approach allows for the identification of inter-linkages between policies and makes clear government institutions that are responsible for implementation.**

📋 Incorporating the SDGs

Ireland has established a SDG National Implementation Plan 2018-2020. The plan focuses on a whole-of-government approach to 2030 Agenda implementation and sets out priorities in terms of awareness raising, meaningful stakeholder engagement, support for communities to contribute to the goals and alignment of national policies with the SDGs. A number of national policies have already included reference to the SDGs, notably in the areas of gender equality, biological diversity, corporate social responsibility and air pollution.

The report refers to the importance of leaving no one behind and inter-generational responsibility (meeting current needs without compromising the ability to meet the needs of future generations) but does not mention other 2030 Agenda principles.

Civil society validity check

According to Coalition 2030, a civil society umbrella group, the implementation plan lacks time-bound targets and is not sufficiently detailed regarding how Ireland will achieve its 2030 Agenda commitments. Coalition 2030 also notes that the principle of leaving no one behind has not been fully incorporated.

Nationalising the 2030 Agenda

Ireland has a sustainable development strategy, "Our Sustainable Future," which sets out a number of priority areas related to the economy, satisfaction of human needs by the efficient use of resources, equity between generations, gender equality, respect for ecological integrity and biodiversity, social equity, respect for cultural heritage and diversity, and equity between countries and regions.

Integration and policy coherence

The report covers all 17 SDGs through a detailed examination. All three dimensions of sustainable development are addressed and the report makes reference to applicable linkages between them. The report notes that the SDGs set the stage for improving policy coherence between domestic and international work. Each SDG chapter includes a section on domestic and international contributions to the SDGs and the report notes a number of sectors in which there have been efforts to improve policy coherence in terms of the impacts of domestic policies on the 2030 Agenda globally.

Means of implementation
Implementing the 2030 Agenda

The report largely focuses on Ireland's support to SDG 17 on partnerships for the goals. Aside from references to investments in research and development, and the goal of diversifying trade, the report does not discussion how Ireland will mobilise the means of implementation at the domestic level.

Rather, the report highlights Ireland's contributions in terms of capacity development with partner countries in taxation, statistics and for civil society. For example, support to partner countries to participate in international trade, and Ireland's contributions through official development assistance. In this context, the report notes the

importance of development effectiveness principles, making Ireland one of the three high-income countries to refer to such principles in their VNR report. The report promises that the government will continue to work towards the 0.7% official development assistance to gross national income target as possible.

Leave no one behind

The report does not have a strong focus on leaving no one behind. While it refers to the principle in an overarching way, there is no dedicated analysis. The discussions in SDG 5 on gender equality and SDG 10 on reduced inequalities are the main sections that detail the experiences of socially excluded groups. People that are at risk of being left behind in Ireland include lone parents, women with disabilities, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI+) persons, Roma, migrant women, and Traveller women. The report details a wide range of existing and new specialised programmes to assist vulnerable groups. It also refers to universal programmes and a National Action Plan for Social Inclusion. Specific policies include the National Strategy for Women and Girls, the National Disability Inclusion Strategy, the National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy and Migrant Integration Strategy. The country is also developing strategies for LGBTI+ people, including youth.

Awareness raising and localisation

The VNR provided an opportunity for the government to raise awareness of the 2030 Agenda. Going forward, it will develop a national SDG communication plan, an online SDG platform that will serve as a "one stop shop" for information on the SDGs, and a programme of SDG Champions who will be asked to raise awareness of the SDGs and demonstrate their relevance to Ireland. Initiatives in the education sector will also be pursued.

The report does not provide significant details on how the 2030 Agenda is being supported at the local level. It notes that increasing local government engagement is a priority of the government's implementation plan.

Partnership to realise the SDGs

While the report highlights the importance of non-state actors in contributing to the SDGs, it provides very few examples of actual partnerships (though at least one partnership for each stakeholder group (civil society, academia and the private sector) is presented. Non-state actors called on the government to provide more examples of non-state actors' efforts in the report during the VNR report validation workshop. The limited reference to the contributions of non-state actors is surprising given the focus on

a "whole-of-society" approach to 2030 Agenda implementation articulated in the report.

Measurement and reporting

The report makes use of the European Union SDG dataset. The availability of data for global indicators is unclear. Nevertheless, the report highlights the creation of an online platform that allows citizens to explore and download nationally available data on the SDGs.

Civil society validity check

Coalition 2030 notes that the dedicated online portal does not cover all SDG indicators and that there is insufficient data to allow for trend analysis, particularly for the environmental goals. Data is also not sufficiently disaggregated for sectors including migrants and the LGBTQI+ community.

In terms of reporting, the government has prepared a timetable for national reporting on the SDGs and reporting to the High-level Political Forum. National reports will be produced every two years and Ireland will present to the High-level Political Forum a total of four times (including its 2018 submission).

GOOD PRACTICE SPOTLIGHT
Ireland has presented a timetable for national and international reporting on the 2030 Agenda. This approach provides transparency and predictability for 2030 Agenda reporting.

Jamaica

In 2018, Jamaica 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 national coordination mechanism for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development implementation and follow-up is multi-tiered, comprising the National 2030 Agenda Oversight Committee, the thematic Working Groups of Vision 2030, sectoral committees, and the 2030 Agenda Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Core Group. The National Development Plan, "Vision 2030 Jamaica", and the SDGs secretariats are located in the Planning Institute of Jamaica, the lead government entity on policy formulation on economic and social issues and external cooperation management to achieve sustainable development. The 2030 Agenda SDGs Core Group is the main political body responsible for SDGs implementation at national level. It includes Planning Institute of Jamaica, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade and the Statistical Institute of Jamaica representatives. The National 2030 Agenda Oversight Committee, which reports to cabinet, was established in 2017 as a technical body comprising high-level representatives from government, civil society groups, the private sector, academia, trade unions, political directorate and youth.

Stakeholder engagement

The report does not outline a formal process for stakeholder engagement beyond what is noted above. Ownership of the 2030 Agenda began in 2014 with national and sector-specific consultations with stakeholders and major groups to highlight the country's development priorities. Stakeholders were also engaged through exhibitions, promotional events, community outreach programmes, billboards and radio interviews. The process of sensitisation regarding the SDGs and consultation on the VNR began in July 2017, engaging civil society organisations, the private sector, academia, philanthropic organisations, international development partners and representatives from sub-groups of the population. In 2018, fifty national prioritisation-related meetings gathered over 480 stakeholders.

Policies

Baseline or gap analysis

A Rapid Integration Assessment and Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support Mission were conducted through the United Nations Development Programme, identifying data gaps for SDGs related to the environment and partnership. Gaps in Jamaica's capacity to measure the progress towards the SDGs and in the country's ability to integrate the three dimensions of sustainable development are also underlined. Some other divides are identified while analysing each SDG such as rural-urban, income, gender and regional gaps.

Incorporating the SDGs

Since the SDGs adoption, the Jamaican government has made deliberate effort to localise and mainstream the SDGs in its national policies and planning frameworks, establishing as a new national approach to development.

Jamaica's long-term National Development Plan, "Vision 2030" was adopted in 2009, and is implemented through triennial medium-term socio-economic policy frameworks. The fourth framework for the period 2018–21 is being designed for alignment with the SDGs and is considered as the primary mechanism for monitoring the implementation of the National Development Plan and the SDGs. The Jamaican cabinet approved a roadmap for SDGs implementation in June 2017.

The 2030 Agenda principle of leaving no one behind is presented as essential for Jamaica and repeatedly mentioned in the report. The report makes no mentions to other 2030 Agenda principles.

Nationalising the 2030 Agenda

The report emphasizes that the Roadmap for SDGs Implementation in Jamaica aligns the SDGs with the national priorities established as part of the Medium-Term Framework 2018–21. Nevertheless, Jamaica's development priorities are not named in the report.

⚙ Integration and policy coherence

The report provides a summary examination of the 17 SDGs, with limited references to linkages between economic, social and environmental dimensions. Even if the three dimensions of sustainable development are considered, greater focus is given to economic.

Policy coherence for sustainable development is considered under a twofold approach: first, referring to strengthening national policies coordination; second, recognising links between the SDGs and other international documents such as the Samoa Pathway for Small Island Developing States, the Sendai Framework, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the New Urban Agenda, and the Paris Agreement on climate change. The Convention on Biological Diversity is also linked to the 2030 Agenda.

Means of implementation
💬 Implementing the 2030 Agenda

The report highlights two best practices: a case study on SDG 7 on affordable and clean energy analysing Jamaica Public Service Company Limited efforts to modernise Jamaica's energy sector, and a case study on SDG 5 on gender equality considering the "Groots Jamaica-Sistren Theatre Collective" work.

The central challenge identified to SDGs achievement in Jamaica is the context of limited fiscal resources that impact national efforts for funding social policies, considering that the government primarily resources Jamaica's SDGs implementation. For the 2017–18 fiscal year, 66.4% of the national budget was financed from domestic resources. Besides domestic and international finance, means of implementation such as technology, capacity building and trade are part of the VNR analysis.

✋ Leave no one behind

The report includes analysis of data requirements for monitoring actions aimed to leave no one behind and identifies vulnerable groups, namely children living in poverty, unemployed youth, persons with disabilities, rural residents, the elderly, fisherfolks, informal settlers, farmers, pregnant and lactating women, and adolescents and youth. The Social Protection Strategy adopted in 2014 is the primary tool to address the issues of vulnerability and social protection. Special programmes were created to support vulnerable groups such as the National Food and Nutrition Security Policy and Action Plan, the 10-year National Strategic Action Plan to Eliminate Gender-Based Violence (2016–26), and the National Policy for Senior Citizens 2018 green paper. Moreover, Jamaica's budget for the financial year 2016–17 is focused on providing safety nets for

the most vulnerable groups. The report includes a subchapter under SDG 5 on gender equality referring to men, pointing out that a male desk was re-established in the Bureau of Gender Affairs in 2016. The Institute for Gender and Development Studies of the Institute of the West Indies teaches the course "Men and Masculinities in the Caribbean."

📡 Awareness raising and localisation

Effective communication and public education campaigns were carried out to increase the level of awareness of all stakeholders and to develop partnerships around the importance of the SDGs and its alignment with Vision 2030 Jamaica. A "Dialogue for Development Series" was also carried out from October to December 2017, concluding with the launch of the national SDGs public education campaign. The VNR report highlights the role of social media in awareness-raising. Finally, with support from the United Nations Development Programme, a SDGs Communications and Advocacy Roadmap 2019–22 was developed.

The adoption of local sustainable development plans provides a mechanism for localising the SDGs. Five of the 14 municipal corporations have developed such plans, and preparation of the remaining ones will start by 2019.

☍ Partnership to realise the SDGs

The report underlines that Jamaica has a well-established tradition of designing solutions to issues of development through participatory governance. Jamaica's whole-of-society, planning-for-development approach has led to a wide range of stakeholder involvement in the national implementation process: civil society, the private sector, academia, parliament, local governments, external partners and the United Nations Systems are part of the SDGs-achievement efforts in Jamaica.

BEST PRACTICE SPOTLIGHT
Jamaica Public Service Company Limited (JPS) is an integrated electric utility company and the sole distributor of electricity in the country. Recognizing the changing face of the global energy landscape globally, JPS embraced its role of "leading the energy revolution," establishing a new energy strategy founded on pillars: fuel diversification, smart grid technology, tailored solutions for customers, nation-building through energy efficiency, customer empowerment and energy education. As a result, the company is

supporting Jamaica's National Energy Policy target of reaching a 30% renewable energy use by 2030, expanding its renewable facilities, facilitating the addition of approximately 78MW of renewable energy in 2016 (almost doubling the renewable energy on the grid in a single year). In 2017, JPS signed an agreement with Eight Rivers Energy Company for the purchase of power from a new 37MW solar power plant, being built in Western Jamaica, that will be the largest solar facility on the island. The plant will contribute to substantial reductions in Jamaica's carbon emissions.

Measurement and reporting

Jamaica can currently produce 66 global SDGs indicators, exposing gaps in national capacities to measure the progress towards the SDGs. The environmental dimension suffers more significant data gaps than others. In the same way, the lack of data disaggregated by sex, age and other characteristics needs to be improved.

Kiribati

In 2018, Kiribati presented the findings from its first voluntary national review (VNR) to the United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. Kiribati submitted only key messages and no formal report. The information provided below draws from that key messages. As no report was submitted, there are significant information gaps for each of the pillars of analysis below.

Governance and institutional mechanisms

Leadership, governance and institutions

Kiribati established a Special Task Force for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) from members of the Development Coordinating Committee, which serves as the main governing body on development activities in the country. The main messages do not provide information on how non-state actors are engaging in governance mechanisms for 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development implementation.

Stakeholder engagement

The main messages indicate that non-state actors were engaged in the creation of the national development plan, however there are no details presented. According to the main messages, non-state actors were engaged in the VNR.

Policies

Baseline or gap analysis

The main messages note that a policy review was carried out for the country's overarching vision document, Kiribati Vision 20, the Kiribati Development Plan and the SDG indicators. The review showed inconsistency between indicators. In addition, Kiribati does not have the capacity to effectively measure and report on progress.

Incorporating the SDGs

According to the main messages, Kiribati has incorporated the SDGs into its policy frameworks. The government established the Kiribati Development Plan (2016–19) and a set of national indicators. The main messages refer only to the 2030 Agenda principle of leaving no one behind.

Nationalising the 2030 Agenda

The SDG indicators were issued to government departments, community groups and the private sector following their adoption. According to the main messages, this process led to the adoption of the Kiribati Development Plan. No further details are provided on this process. The main messages note that while national priorities and indicators exist, following the VNR process, the national goals and indicators will be "realigned" for the final two years of the Kiribati Development Plan.

Integration and policy coherence

The main messages do not include a goal-by-goal analysis. Summary-level information is provided on progress, capturing all three dimensions of sustainable development, though with a limited focus on environmental issues beyond the impacts of climate change. The main messages do not refer to other international agreements that are relevant for 2030 Agenda implementation or policy coherence for sustainable development.

Means of implementation

Implementing the 2030 Agenda

The main messages highlight capacity constraints related to prioritisation; improving stakeholder engagement; limited alignment between national, regional and global indicators; insufficient resources; lack of baseline data and poor statistical capacity. Kiribati invites international development partners to continue to provide the country with support to address these constraints and implement the 2030 Agenda as it works towards least developed country graduation.

Leave no one behind

Beyond reference to the principle, there is no dedicated analysis to leaving no one behind in the main messages.

Awareness raising and localisation

There is no information on awareness-raising and localisation in the main messages.

Partnership to realise the SDGs

The main messages offer no information on partnerships to implement the 2030 Agenda beyond the role of development partners noted above.

Measurement and reporting

While there is no information presented on overall data availability such as disaggregated data, the main messages consistently point to statistical capacity constraints. Support from development partners in this area will be critical to facilitating monitoring of the 2030 Agenda.

Lao People's Democratic Republic

In 2018, Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR) 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

Political responsibility for 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development implementation sits with the prime minister. Lao PDR established a National Steering Committee for Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) implementation. Members include representatives from government institutions and mass organisations (quasi-governmental party organisations that often fulfil civil society roles such as organising community-level activities). The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Planning and Investment lead a National SDG Secretariat. Focal points have also been established in relevant government institutions. The report does not provide additional information on how non-state actors participate in 2030 Agenda implementation mechanisms.

Stakeholder engagement

According to the report, Lao PDR "has made significant advances in enlarging the space for stakeholders" using culturally sensitive approaches (p. 8). The report does not provide information regarding actual mechanisms for engagement but rather refers to the existence of various channels and forums for participation. The report outlines consultation efforts related to the establishment of national priorities in the context of the VNR. VNR consultations occurred over 2017–18 with stakeholders from the government, parliament, private sector, academia, civil society, United Nations agencies, and other development partners.

Civil society validity check

According to a civil society report prepared by the Lao PDR Civil Society Organisation Coordination Office, consultation on national priorities and the VNR was limited.

Policies

Baseline or gap analysis

The report notes that Lao PDR plans to carry out an assessment to establish baselines for all SDGs.

Incorporating the SDGs

Lao PDR has incorporated the SDGs into its Eighth National Socio-Economic Development Plan. According to the report, nearly 60% of the plan's indicators are linked to SDG indicators. In addition, the country is preparing a national SDG roadmap that will emphasize institutional strengthening, partnerships, awareness-raising, multi-stakeholder consultations and dialogue, policy coherence, budgeting, and monitoring and reporting.

In terms of 2030 Agenda principles, the report refers only to leaving no one behind.

Nationalising the 2030 Agenda

National priorities and indicators have been established for 2030 Agenda implementation. The country's planning frameworks prioritise green growth and sustainable development, poverty reduction and graduation from least developed country status, in addition to the priority of addressing unexploded ordnances.

Integration and policy coherence

The report examines all 17 SDGs and an additional SDG 18 on lives safe from unexploded ordnance. Lao PDR was heavily bombed during the second Indochina War (1964–73). The clean-up of unexploded ordnance is a major priority for the government. The report provides a summary-level examination of the goals, with equal attention to all three dimensions of sustainable development, though it makes limited references to the linkages between the goals.

The report refers to policy coherence, understood in terms of vertical and horizontal policy coherence. The report refers to the Paris Agreement on climate change, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda

and aid and development effectiveness principles. Lao PDR has an overarching framework for effective development co-operation, the Vientiane Declaration on Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (2016–25) that aligns with the 2011 Busan Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation, the 2014 Mexico High Level Meeting Communiqué, the 2015 Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the SDGs.

Means of implementation
Implementing the 2030 Agenda

The main challenges facing Lao PDR in 2030 Agenda implementation include targeting those left behind, strengthening administrative data, and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of public expenditure. The report also highlights specific challenges in the context of each SDG.

> **GOOD PRACTICE SPOTLIGHT**
> **The Lao PDR report includes information on specific challenges to 2030 Agenda implementation as well as in the context of each SDG. The report also presents next steps for each goal and priorities for realising progress.**
>
> **Lao PDR plans to cost implementation of the 2030 Agenda under the SDG roadmap and the report outlines a number of sources of finance, including public and private finance, as well as official development assistance. Predictability and sustainability of external support is a challenge for SDG-focused programmes. The government plans to harness new sources of support where possible, including through South-South Co-operation.**

Leave no one behind

Lao PDR requires additional data to address the leave no one behind principle with inconsistent disaggregation by sex and age. The report does not have a chapter on leaving no one behind, however, it does highlight a number of vulnerable groups including those living in high and remote areas, women and adolescent girls, children, elderly, people with disabilities, farmers with limited access to land, migrants, unskilled and unemployed workers, and unpaid workers. Poverty reduction strategies are being used to address vulnerabilities and a poverty-monitoring system has been set up. However, budget and capacity constraints mean that progress is slow. The report also outlines specific initiatives for target populations, such as the

establishment of a National Commission for Persons with Disabilities and the Elderly and strategies and investments to promote gender equality.

Awareness raising and localisation

The report highlights awareness-raising activities through regular multi-stakeholder meetings and meetings with students and academia. The government plans additional awareness-raising, public education and stakeholder consultation as next steps over 2018–20.

In terms of localisation of the 2030 Agenda, the government has supported institutional administration to implement and monitor progress on the Eighth National Socio-Economic Development Plan and selected SDG targets.

Partnership to realise the SDGs

The report notes the importance of "issue-based" partnerships for 2030 Agenda implementation (i.e. partnerships grounded in issues rather than centrally planned). The report includes reference to a limited number of partnerships by the volunteer sector. Lao PDR received support by United Nations agencies to carry out the VNR.

Measurement and reporting

The status of data for SDG monitoring is unclear from the report, however, additional efforts are needed to improve data availability including disaggregated data. Efforts to improve statistical capacity will be included in the SDG roadmap.

The National Steering Committee has responsibility for monitoring and evaluation of implementation results. Relevant government institutions submitted progress reports in February 2018, which served as inputs into the VNR process and report.

Latvia

In 2018, Latvia 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, the Cross-Sectoral Coordination Centre is responsible for development planning. Directly under the authority of the prime minister, the centre has served as the focal point for 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development implementation since 2015. The prime minister receives opinions on implementation from the National Development Council which includes government institutions and social partners.

💬 Stakeholder engagement

Latvia has a well-established system for stakeholder engagement that is now being used in the context of 2030 Agenda implementation (see good practice box). There are a variety of ways for stakeholders to engage throughout policymaking and implementation.

> **GOOD PRACTICE SPOTLIGHT**
> **In Latvia, the public can participate in the policymaking stage by providing inputs into problem identification, preparation of planning documents and supporting policy implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Public consultations offer an opportunity for the public (individuals and organisations) to join informal and formal working groups, advisory councils and other forums. They can also send written opinions to the government. Citizens have the right to comment on draft documents. Latvia considers its procedure for achieving consensus on development planning as best practice.**
>
> **Non-state actors were engaged in the VNR and in selection of national sustainable development priorities. An informal working group was established for the VNR that included**

> **government institutions and social partners. A draft version of the report was published on the cabinet website for debate and parliament was kept informed of progress on the VNR.**

Policies

〰 Baseline or gap analysis

Latvia assessed policies and data availability to inform 2030 Agenda implementation. SDG targets were mapped in terms of their relevance to the country, against Latvian policies and in terms of respective government institutions responsible for their implementation. An impact assessment of the government's current national development plan was also carried out. The targets were also mapped against existing indicators. The VNR report includes gaps that were identified for each SDG as well as plans to address them.

☑ Incorporating the SDGs

The VNR report focuses on existing policies and their linkages to the SDGs, indicating that the SDGs have not been formally incorporated into national development plans. The country's long-term planning document, Latvia's Sustainable Development Strategy until 2030 (Latvia 2030) was drafted before the establishment of the 2030 Agenda. Seven-year national development plans are used to operationalise the priorities in Latvia 2030.

The VNR report refers to the principles of leaving no one behind and inter-generational responsibility.

⌖ Nationalising the 2030 Agenda

Latvia's national priorities include the development of cultural space, long term investments in human capital, education, establishing an innovative and eco-efficient economy, the environment, regional development (referred to as the spatial development perspective), innovative government and public participation. According to the VNR report, these priorities capture all SDGs. Latvia has compared the SDG targets and indicators against those that already exist in national policies. The country does not appear to have developed national SDG-

specific targets and indicators, however the VNR report notes that 136 targets are relevant for Latvia, 44 of which are included in Latvia 2030, 66 in the National Development Plan 2020 and 108 in sectoral policies. Thirty-three targets are not relevant for Latvia.

⚙ Integration and policy coherence

The report provides a detailed examination of all SDGs with equal attention to all dimensions of sustainable development. However, limited references are made to the linkages between the SDGs.

The VNR report refers to policy coherence for sustainable development, which Latvia sees as entailing coherence and public participation through planning processes and as vertical and horizontal integration. The report details how the country ensures policy coherence for sustainable development through a series of steps in the policy process. The VNR refers to the Paris Agreement on climate change, the Convention on Biological Diversity and aid-effectiveness principles.

Means of implementation
⮂ Implementing the 2030 Agenda

The report notes that Latvia's procedure for development planning is a form of best practice. In terms of a lesson learned for accelerating 2030 Agenda implementation, the VNR report points to the introduction of individual plans to address vulnerable populations, including through the provision of coordinated support (such as health care, social skills and training). Latvia faces a number of structural challenges to 2030 Agenda implementation including insufficient productivity, emigration, an ageing population and territorial inequality.

The VNR report notes that "linking budget and planning processes is crucial to achieving sustainable development goals" (p. 31). Investments are set out in the National Development Plan with funding needs broken down according to sources, including the national budget and other sources of financing.

Latvia's contributions in terms of official development assistance, capacity development and technology transfers are also highlighted in the VNR report.

✋ Leave no one behind

Efforts to leave no one behind are informed by existing data in Latvia. Families with three or more children, employed persons in poverty, elderly (especially those living alone) and single-parent families are at risk of being left behind. Reducing inequality is an overarching goal for Latvia. Policies are developed with particular attention to high-risk groups. The VNR report points to range of specialised government programmes to support vulnerable groups, including guaranteed minimum income benefits.

☡ Awareness raising and localisation

The VNR report does not provide a lot of information on awareness raising, beyond an education initiative, the World's Largest Lesson, that includes the development of lesson plans on the 2030 Agenda.

The VNR report outlines efforts by local government, noting that territorial development planning documents consider policies by the United Nations and the European Union. Sustainable development strategies have been adopted by all local governments, based on Latvia 2030 and regional priorities. A number of initiatives have been carried out by local governments to raise awareness and exchange best practices. The Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments is playing a leading role in this context.

⧓ Partnership to realise the SDGs

The report provides examples of contributions to 2030 Agenda implementation from a range of stakeholders. Parliament has a Sustainable Development Commission that reviews proposals on sustainable development and promotes initiatives working with other stakeholders. Civil society organisations are working on all SDGs and representing citizens at local, national, regional and global levels. The Latvian Corporate Social Responsibility Platform has carried out research on the impacts of businesses on the SDGs and is encouraging companies to assess their impacts on sustainable development. The report highlights the inclusion of the SDGs into university activities research platforms at Riga Technical University.

📋 Measurement and reporting

Data is presented in the annex of the report but the indicators are drawn from a range of sources (global, regional and national), making the status of data availability unclear. There is no mention of the status of disaggregated data or efforts to improve data availability in the report. In 2019, the prime minister will report to Latvian parliament on progress on national development plans. No further details on 2030 Agenda reporting are provided.

Lebanon

In 2018, Lebanon 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 report, the government established a national committee in 2017 to oversee 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development implementation. Chaired by the prime minister, the committee includes government institutions, civil society, and the private sector. Sub-committees were established for people, planet, prosperity and peace, with partnership mainstreamed. A dedicated statistical taskforce also exists. The Office of the Prime Minster serves as secretariat for the committee.

Stakeholder engagement

The report does not provide information on a formal process for stakeholder engagement. Consultations occurred for the development of the VNR report, including interviews and workshops with civil society, the private sector, academia and government. A civil society report was prepared by the Arab Non-government Organization Network for Development and the American University in Beirut Policy Institute.

Policies

Baseline or gap analysis

The report makes no mention of a gap or baseline analysis.

Incorporating the SDGs

The 2030 Agenda has not been incorporated into national policies. The report notes that Lebanon's policies incorporate the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) without naming them. The VNR process has socialised the importance of integrating the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda principles into planning across government departments. Some departments have begun to integrate the 2030 Agenda, however, most policies still need to be adapted.

Civil society validity check

According to the civil society report, there was no progress on 2030 Agenda implementation immediately following its adoption in 2015. A number of initiatives to promote the achievement of the SDGs occurred in 2017, including the establishment of the National Committee for SDGs.

The report refers to the principles of universality, leaving no one behind and the human rights-based nature of the 2030 Agenda.

Nationalising the 2030 Agenda

Lebanon has not selected national priorities for 2030 Agenda implementation or established national targets and indicators.

Civil society validity check

A consultation carried out by civil society for the VNR identified a number of priorities including poverty eradication, education, reducing unemployment, infrastructure, natural resource conservation, sustainable cities and addressing the impacts of the Syrian crisis on sustainable development.

Integration and policy coherence

The report provides a summary examination of all SDGs with equal attention to economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. However, it makes limited references to linkages between the dimensions. While the report does not refer to policy coherence for sustainable development, it does provide an assessment of domestic and foreign policies in terms of Lebanon's contributions in light of the Syrian refugee crisis. The report refers only to the Paris Agreement on climate change and the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Means of implementation
⟲ Implementing the 2030 Agenda

The report highlights best practices in a number of goal areas including reducing out-of-pocket spending, improvements in education, the development of industrial zones and the preservation of cultural heritage. Key challenges for 2030 Agenda implementation include high fiscal deficits and debt ratios and the need to develop the national statistical system.

The impact of the conflict in Syria is highlighted as a key constraint to Lebanon's sustainable development trajectory. The VNR report highlights that commitments by development partners have not fully materialised. Lebanon has taken steps to improve its trade position, however, the conflict in Syria has impacted relationships with trade partners and trading routes.

✋ Leave no one behind

The report identifies women, displaced people, the elderly, non-public sector retirees, people with disabilities, the unemployed, blue-collar self-employed and the extreme poor as at risk of being left behind. The status of data to leave no one behind is not articulated. The report highlights the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan as one means to leave no one behind. It also notes that social protection policies are being enhanced and points to tax policies. A Minister for Women's Affairs was also recently appointed. Legislation to combat domestic violence has also been passed and a number of laws have been enacted or revised to address discrimination against women.

⊚ Awareness raising and localisation

The government conducted three workshops with the government, civil society and the private sector to launch the VNR and raise awareness of the 2030 Agenda. Civil society organisations held regional consultations and created a website on the SDGs.

The report includes some examples of local initiatives that contribute to the SDGs, however, the report does not provide an overview of the status of localisation.

⤣ Partnership to realise the SDGs

The VNR report was prepared with support from the United Nations Country Team. The VNR report includes a chapter on specific contributions from civil society and the private sector. It highlights the role of civil society in conducting consultations, awareness-raising, and follow-up and review. The Global Compact Network Lebanon is working to mobilise the private sector (and other stakeholders) to support 2030 Agenda implementation and

has carried out a study on private sector SDG priorities. Academic institutions are carrying out research in support of the SDGs. To follow-up on progress towards the SDGs, a legislative institutional mechanism was established and parliament's SDG committee has started mapping legislation against the 2030 Agenda.

📋 Measurement and reporting

While data availability is unclear, Lebanon intends to start producing data. According to the report, support from the international community is needed in this area and the government plans to invest in the capacity of the national statistical system.

Beyond the legislative institutional mechanisms for follow-up on 2030 Agenda implementation noted above, the report does not include additional information on reporting in terms of content or frequency.

Lithuania

In 2018, Lithuania 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 report, Lithuania established a National Commission for Sustainable Development under the leadership of the prime minister. The commission includes representation by government, civil society, the private sector and research institutions. It is responsible for assessing progress on sustainable development and making proposals to the government regarding priorities. The Ministry of the Environment coordinates implementation of the country's National Strategy for Sustainable Development and has established a working group of experts that assists in the preparation of reviews of the national strategy.

💬 Stakeholder engagement

Beyond engagement in formal governance arrangements, the report does not provide information on formal mechanisms for stakeholder engagement. Non-state actors were consulted on national priorities for 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development implementation through the VNR and a group of experts from government, civil society and municipalities assisted in preparing the VNR report.

Policies

📈 Baseline or gap analysis

Lithuania examined policies and data for 2030 Agenda implementation. The government compared the 2030 Agenda with national strategic planning documents, finding that most of the Sustainable Development Goals (SGDs) and their targets were reflected. In terms of data, Statistics Lithuania set up a working group to analyse the availability of SDG indicators and prepare a list of the national indicators.

☑ Incorporating the SDGs

The report notes that existing policies, particularly the National Strategy for Sustainable Development, align with the 2030 Agenda. The government is in the process of establishing a new general plan for the country for 2021 that will integrate the SDGs. The country's Progress Strategy, "Lithuania 2030", will also be updated, including goals until 2030 and a vision for 2050.

The report refers to the 2030 Agenda principles of universality and inter-generational responsibility.

📡 Nationalising the 2030 Agenda

The report indicates that Lithuania selected the following priority areas for 2030 Agenda implementation: reduction of poverty, social exclusion and income inequality, promotion of employment, strengthening of public health, increasing the quality of health care and accessibility of health services, development of an innovative economy and smart energy, quality education and development cooperation. As noted above, national indicators have been selected.

⚙ 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. It includes an assessment of Lithuania's contributions to the SDGs globally through development co-operation and notes the importance of policy coherence for sustainable development in the drafting of domestic policies. Overarching frameworks and policies, such as Lithuania 2030, are used to ensure coherence and integrated solutions in policy documents. The report does not include significant references to relevant international agreements and frameworks that support 2030 Agenda implementation, noting only the Paris Agreement on climate change.

Means of implementation

🔁 Implementing the 2030 Agenda

The report does not provide information on best practices, lessons learned, challenges in implementation (though challenges are noted for specific goals) or where Lithuania would like to learn from other countries. There are no references to budgeting, costing or financial resources for 2030 Agenda implementation. The report notes Lithuania's contributions through official development assistance

and that the country will strive to achieve the target of 0.33% official development assistance to gross national income by 2030. The report also notes the country's contributions to addressing illicit financial flows.

Leave no one behind

Efforts to leave no one behind are informed by existing data in Lithuania. Although the report does not specifically refer to leaving no one behind, it notes that single persons, single adult households with one or more children, disabled and elderly people are at greatest risk of poverty. The report notes a number of existing and specialised programmes that target specific groups, in addition to universal programmes such as legal frameworks, particularly in support of gender equality. Lithuania is promoting employment, applying measures to reduce income inequality, and ensuring equal access to social, health care, education, cultural and legal services. Social security benefits are guided by minimum consumption needs based on an indicator that sets amounts for social security benefits and is revised annually.

Awareness raising and localisation

According to the report, Lithuania has taken a number of steps to socialise the 2030 Agenda among the public through varied events and media.

> **GOOD PRACTICE SPOTLIGHT**
> **To raise awareness of the 2030 Agenda, Lithuania organised documentary film festivals, photography exhibitions, interactive events, "brain fights" and discussions. The government disseminated information through television, radio and social media. Awareness-raising projects have been implemented with civil society, and the education, academic and private sectors.**
>
> **The report outlines contributions from local levels of government in the VNR, but does not provide details on the status of localisation.**

Partnership to realise the SDGs

The report calls for participation by all stakeholders in 2030 Agenda implementation, however, it tends to outline engagement in the VNR rather than other contributions and activities more generally. In the context of development co-operation, the report highlights the role civil society and the private sector in policy formation and as partners in the delivery.

Measurement and reporting

The report notes that data was published for 61% of the global SDG indicators at the start of 2018. The report stated that 16% of the global indicators have been deemed not relevant for Lithuania. The government plans to improve the accessibility of indicators for users going forward. A prototype of the national reporting platform has been established, however, the report makes no mention of regular reporting processes beyond this.

Mali

In 2018, Mali 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 report, Mali has plans to establish institutional structures to work on Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) implementation. These would comprise a National Steering Committee chaired by the prime minister (head of government) and composed of ministerial departments, the parliament, high-level officials from regions, the National Council of Civil Society, trade unions, technical and financial partners and business. The secretariat of this committee would be provided by an SDG National Coordination Unit.

At the sectoral level, five result groups would be set up that address the social, economic, environmental, partnership and governance dimensions of the SDGs, each composed of ministerial departments and development actors, and coordinated by a lead ministerial department.

At the regional, local and communal level, the coordination mechanism for monitoring SDG implementation would be provided by the existing regional, local and communal steering, coordination and monitoring committees for development actions, with some minor adjustments in their composition.

Stakeholder engagement

The VNR report does not include information on a formal process for stakeholder engagement. As part of a United Nations SDG action campaign, the government of Mali, with the support of civil society organisations, launched the My World 2030 survey in May 2018 to ensure that concerns of ordinary citizens were effectively taken into account in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The survey was released in all regions of Mali, and targeted 100,000 Malians from different sectors and demographic profiles. According to the report, 23% of respondents identified SDG 3 on good health and well-being as a priority, and the other top goals identified by participants included SDG 2 on zero hunger, SDG 4 on quality education, SDG

6 on clean water and sanitation, SDG 7 on affordable and clean energy, and SDG 8 on decent work and economic growth.

Moreover, the report indicates that various stakeholders including representatives from sectoral departments, civil society, the private sector and parliament participated in a scoping meeting organised in February 2018 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation in preparation for Mali's VNR.

Policies

Baseline or gap analysis

The report indicates that a rapid integrated assessment was carried out to assess the alignment of Mali's sectoral policies, plans, programmes and other strategic documents with the 17 SDGs. Based on the results of that assessment, it notes that the SDGs were well taken into account in the Strategic Framework for Economic Recovery and Sustainable Development 2016–18 and other sectoral documents. It also outlines "significant" gaps, particularly in the full consideration of SDG 4 on quality education SDG 6 on clean water and sanitation, SDG 8on decent work and economic growth, SDG 10 on reduced inequalities, SDG 12 on responsible consumption and production, SDG 13 on climate action, SDG 15 on life on land and SDG 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions.

Incorporating the SDGs

At the time of the publication of the report, Mali had not yet integrated the SDGs into its planning documents. The report states, however, that actions and initiatives were underway to integrate the SDGs in documents such as the Vision Etude Nationale Prospective 2025, the Strategic Framework for Economic Recovery and Sustainable Development 2016–18), and the National Decentralization Policy Framework Document. According to the report, Mali is also planning to implement an SDG roadmap.

The report does not refer specifically to a human rights-based approach to 2030 Agenda implementation, but makes several references to human rights and to actions taken by Mali to protect these rights. It also includes a dedicated section on leave no one behind.

Nationalising the 2030 Agenda

Mali identified 106 priority targets, and categorised them as urgent, to be achieved in the medium term, or to be taken into account in the longer term. Urgent targets, as outlined in the annex of the report, are aligned with the SDG global targets. The report notes that priority targets will be integrated into municipal, local and regional development policies.

Integration and policy coherence

The report examines progress on all SDGs, except SDG 14 on life below water. It does not refer specifically to policy coherence for sustainable development, but notes that the government of Mali intends to coordinate implementation of national, regional and municipal development programmes towards sustainable development in a coherent manner. It links SDG implementation to climate change and the Paris Agreement on climate change, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction; and to the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, the Accra Agenda for Action and the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation.

Means of implementation
Implementing the 2030 Agenda

The report includes sections on good practices, lessons learned and challenges faced for SDG implementation. On challenges, it notes capacity building, availability of reliable statistical data, communication, programme coordination, and mobilisation of adequate resources (internal and external) for financing SDG implementation. Costing for SDG implementation does not appear in the report.

Mali indicates that access to information and communication technologies is expanding, and outlines initiatives it undertook in this regard, including the National Policy on Science, Technology and Innovation, the "Digital Mali 2020" policy that seeks to boost the digital sector, and the establishment of the Agency for Information Technology and Communication, which is mandated to modernise public administration, and provide Internet access in schools and municipalities. On international public finance, the report states that the government has begun the process of developing a national development cooperation policy, which aims to make Mali an emerging country that will progressively not require financial assistance to support its development.

Leave no one behind

The report lists as "excluded people" the elderly, people living with HIV/AIDS, the poor, people with disabilities, and children. The country has existing specialised programmes and policies for specific groups and universal programmes, including the National Social Protection Policy, the National Solidarity Policy, the National Solidarity Fund, the National Humanitarian Action Policy and the Strategy for the Economic Promotion of People with Disabilities. Moreover, Mali has mandatory health insurance that had 1,056,441 people registered (33.88% of its target) in 2016, and the "Jigisèmèjiri Program", a social nets programme that provided cash transfers to 251,643 of the poorest households in 2016. The country also celebrates the month of solidarity and fight against exclusion.

Mali has taken various actions towards gender equality, such as the implementation of a national gender policy, the adoption of gender-responsive planning and budgeting, and the adoption of texts aimed at strengthening women's economic rights.

Awareness raising and localisation

A national workshop seeking to strengthen the leadership capacity of stakeholders in prioritising and integrating the SDGs into development policies in Mali was organised in November 2016 under the chairmanship of the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation. It brought together stakeholders from the public sector, civil society, local authorities and the private sector. Workshops seeking to train officials, increase ownership, and identify priority targets were also organised in several regions of the country.

A session presenting the outcomes of these workshops was organised for members of the national assembly to help them understand their responsibility in the process. Furthermore, the Malian government, with the support of the United Nations Development Programme is considering translating a brochure on the SDGs into local languages.

According to the report, Mali plans to have institutional structures at the regional, local and communal level work on SDG implementation.

Partnership to realise the SDGs

With the support of partners, civil society organised several consultations at the community level, workshops at the regional level and a roundtable on the SDGs. The report indicates that the National Assembly of Mali adopted a resolution for the monitoring of the SDGs, and set up a SDG-monitoring committee, in accordance with a decision of February 2016.

Mali notes that the preparation of its VNR report benefited from the support of United Nations agencies in the country, and of the Institut de la Francophonie pour le Développement Durable.

Measurement and reporting

The report does not provide an indication of the percentage of SDG indicators for which data are available, but notes that structural problems encountered for SDG implementation include the lack of statistical data in several areas. It also calls for financial support to improve data collection and to ensure the production of reliable statistics, as well as plans to revise its Statistical Master Plan to advance SDG implementation.

Malta

In 2018, Malta 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

Under the Sustainable Development Act (2012), a Focal Point Network was established that is supporting 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development implementation. The Ministry for the Environment, Sustainable Development & Climate Change is responsible for the network, which includes participation by senior representatives from across government and provides a forum to share information on progress on sustainable development. Malta also has a Guardian of Future Generations organisation, which safeguards inter-generational and intra-generational sustainable development. A National Commission for Sustainable Development was established in 2002 with the responsibility of advocating for sustainable development, reviewing progress and achieving further progress. The VNR emphasizes Malta's role in terms of participation in regional (European Union) and Commonwealth institutions, and initiatives related to the 2030 Agenda.

Stakeholder engagement

The report does not provide information on formal processes for stakeholder engagement. It notes that as part of the VNR, government institutions were responsible for liaising with stakeholders to provide their inputs into the efforts of the task force responsible for the VNR. Consultations were also held. The report includes a chapter by civil society.

Policies

Baseline or gap analysis

The report provides no information on baseline or gap analysis.

Incorporating the SDGs

Malta is in the process of developing Vision 2050, which will incorporate the 2030 Agenda. A national strategy and action plan will also be prepared to guide implementation. The report refers to the 2030 Agenda principles of universality, inter-generational responsibility and leaving no one behind.

Nationalising the 2030 Agenda

Malta has yet to establish national priorities for 2030 Agenda implementation. However, the report notes that Vision 2050 will include more efficient use of resources, and long-term management and investment in human, social and material resources. Vision 2050 will be grounded in the concept of a sustainable society (understood in terms of all dimensions of sustainable development). Malta is making use of the European Union set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) indicators and working towards compliance on the global indicator set.

Integration and policy coherence

The report provides a detailed examination of all SDGs with equal attention to the three dimensions of sustainable development and references to the linkages between them. The report does not address policy coherence for sustainable development but does note Malta's contributions to the 2030 Agenda globally through foreign policies. The report refers to the Paris Agreement on climate change, the Convention on Biological Diversity, and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.

Means of implementation

Implementing the 2030 Agenda

The report does not refer to best practices, lessons learned, challenges in implementation or learning from peers. There is also no information on budgeting and costing for 2030 Agenda implementation. The report highlights the establishment of the Malta Development Bank, which has the objective of addressing market failures and will include projects with small- and medium-sized enterprises and investments in infrastructure. Malta is committed to reaching 0.33% of official development assistance to gross national income by 2030. Malta supports preferential trade for least developed countries.

Leave no one behind

Malta's efforts to leave no on behind are informed by existing data. Children, elderly people, unemployed persons and the working poor are identified as at risk of being left behind. Malta uses existing specialised and universal programmes to support vulnerable populations. Malta has a national poverty reduction and social inclusion strategy as well as policies, strategies and initiatives for persons with disabilities, anti-discrimination laws, and institutions and programmes to support gender equality. A non-binary gender marker has also been rolled out for identification cards and passports that will benefit trans and intersex people who will no longer have to identify themselves as male or female.

Awareness raising and localisation

The report refers to the role of the Focal Network in raising awareness across government but does not provide information on broader awareness-raising activities. There is no information provided on the status of localisation.

Partnership to realise the SDGs

The report provides limited examples of contributions from non-state actors to 2030 Agenda implementation. Nevertheless, it notes that parliament has a requirement to hold annual discussions on the country's Sustainable Development Report, which highlights commitments to sustainable development. The report includes a chapter by civil society that outlines a range of initiatives and working groups that are supporting implementation. A public-private initiative, "Making Malta Green and Clean," is also highlighted in the report. The initiative encourages citizens to keep their communities clean.

Measurement and reporting

The status of data availability is unclear from the report as only the European Union indicator set is provided. The report makes no mention of the status of disaggregated data or efforts to improve data availability.

The Sustainable Development Act requires an annual discussion on the Sustainable Development Report by parliament as noted above. The report does not include information on when Malta will report to the High-level Political Forum next.

Mexico

In 2018, Mexico submitted its second voluntary national review (VNR) report to the United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. Its previous presentation took place in 2016.

Governance and institutional arrangements

🏛 Leadership, governance and institutions

The report describes the bodies that support implementation and follow-up for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development National Council, as a leading national implementation institution that gathers federal and local governments; the private sector; civil society and academia; the Specialized Technical Committee of the Sustainable Development Goals; the Working Group for the SDGs Legislative Follow-up; and local-level institutions. Mexico's president is the main political actor responsible for implementing the SDGs.

Mexico is promoting the establishment of a Network for the Strengthening of National Capacities for 2030 Agenda implementation and follow-up in Latin America and the Caribbean.

💬 Stakeholder engagement

The report clearly shows the broad participation of multiple actors engaged in the institutional framework and the 2030 Agenda implementation and follow-up process in Mexico. With this group, a process is underway to build a national strategy for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda that should define national SDGs priorities and roles for different national development actors.

The 2018 report highlights contributions of different sectors to its drafting process, including consultations with civil society, the private sector, the academic and scientific community, United Nations System agencies in Mexico and representatives of vulnerable groups.

A civil society spotlight report was written by "Espacio de Articulación de la Sociedad Civil para el Seguimiento de la Agenda 2030 en México," a group composed of 26 civil society organisations.

Civil society validity check

The civil society report focuses on the establishment of a framework for following-up and implementing the 2030 Agenda at the national level. It does not contradict the national report, but highlights that some relevant processes linked to civil society participation are not progressing at a desirable speed.

Policies

〰 Baseline or gap analysis

In its 2016 report, Mexico pointed out the need for establishing national baselines. No references to this issue are included in the 2018 report, but the statistical annex indicates national baselines for each SDG indicator.

Similarly, the 2018 report repeatedly refers to the need to close national gaps, but there is no identification of what those gaps are. However, gender divides are mentioned.

☑ Incorporating the SDGs

During the 2017–18 electoral process, the main political parties incorporated the 2030 Agenda in their electoral platforms. Currently, the national consultation is underway to adopt a national strategy for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The planning law was reformed in 2018 to guarantee the incorporation of the 2030 Agenda in the national planning framework. This reform introduces binding references to the three dimensions of sustainable development including the principles of equity, inclusion and non-discrimination as guides to long-term planning. Leaving no one behind is cross-cutting in the report, and a human rights-based approach is mentioned as its basis.

◉ Nationalising the 2030 Agenda

As noted above, the country is in the process of developing a national strategy for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

⚙ Integration and policy coherence

The report provides a summary examination of the 17 SDGs, with limited references to linkages between economic, social and environmental dimensions, though the three sustainable development dimensions receive balanced attention across the report.

Policy coherence for sustainable development is rarely addressed in the analysis of domestic implementation and ensuring consistency in Mexico's public policies is still a challenge. Nevertheless, the country co-authored the publication "2018 Coherence of Policies for Sustainable Development" edited by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development. As part of the first round of the Voluntary Peer Learning Mechanism on 2030 Agenda national implementation, Mexico, Germany and China participated a working group focused on policy coherence for SDGs implementation.

The Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Paris Agreement on climate change and efforts to fight climate change are linked to the SDG national-implementation process. The Mexican General Law on Climate Change was reformed and aligned with the 2030 Agenda in April 2018.

Means of implementation
🖳 Implementing the 2030 Agenda

Neither best practices nor lessons learned are included in the report. Some challenges are identified in the text in a general way, including the need to strengthen capacities in all areas to eliminate asymmetries, work towards the achievement of a shared vision for the future and promote the adoption of the 2030 Agenda by all stakeholders. Each SDG analysis includes particular challenges to achievement.

Budgetary issues receive special attention: the report highlights an analysis of links between the budgetary programmes of the Federal Public Administration and the SDG targets. The analysis identified that 80.7% of budgetary programmes in the Fiscal Year 2018 Budget addressed topics related to 2030 Agenda commitments. However, there are almost no mention to means of implementation beyond this.

✋ Leave no one behind

Mexico is among the top 25% of countries with the highest levels of inequality. For this reason, Mexico considers it crucial to reduce inequalities and modify all the structures that contribute to the maintenance and reproduction of disparities. In this perspective, the Mexican government understands the leave no one behind principle as the central axis of the 2030 Agenda. The Multi-disciplinary Working

Committees of the 2030 Agenda National Council are mandated to consider the leave no one behind principle in their work.

A number of groups are identified as at risk of being left behind: farmers, indigenous peoples, afro-descendant, elderly, children, adolescents, youth, people with disabilities, lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex, migrants and refugees. To support these groups, specific and universal social programmes are in place.

Regarding data, in a general way, the report affirms that SDGs progress should not be measured only with national averages but with disaggregated data. In recent years, Mexico has approved a set of laws aimed to promote gender equity. Mexico is financing programmes for urban and rural women entrepreneurs, and labels budgetary resources considering gender equality.

📡 Awareness raising and localisation

The 2016 report pointed out that awareness-raising campaigns should be undertaken targeting all social actors, aimed to improve citizens' knowledge of 2030 Agenda contents and to highlight that its implementation is a shared responsibility. However, no mentions to awareness-raising or information campaigns are part of the 2018 report.

By June 2018, 31 Mexican states established the legal basis of their Monitoring and Instrumentation Body, and 29 of them formally installed it.

🔗 Partnership to realise the SDGs

The report shows high levels of participation among partners such as civil society, the private sector, academia, parliament, subnational governments, United Nations System agencies in Mexico and international cooperation partners for the national implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The parliament has formed a Working Group for the SDGs Legislative Follow-up.

📋 Measurement and reporting

The National Institute of Statistics and Geography mapped the data availability of global indicators, concluding that the country is ready to follow-up on 169 of the 232 indicators. However, the report does not provide details related to the level of disaggregation of the available data. Information on national reporting is also not included.

Namibia

In 2018, Namibia 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 report, the Development Partners Forum provides the highest level of oversight for 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development implementation. A National Steering Committee is responsible for tracking implementation and includes senior representatives from government and development partners. The National Planning Commission serves as the secretariat and is responsible for coordination.

Stakeholder engagement

The report does not set out a process for ongoing stakeholder engagement on the 2030 Agenda. However, non-state actors were engaged in the identification of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) priorities through national and sub-national-level consultations on the country's national development plan. Under the VNR, the government engaged with the public sector, private sector, civil society, development partners, the United Nations, academia and other interest groups according to the report.

Policies

Baseline or gap analysis

Namibia prepared baselines for all SDGs. Specific gaps are presented in the goal-by-goal analysis.

Incorporating the SDGs

Namibia has incorporated the SDGs into its Fifth National Development Plan and its acceleration tool, the Harambee Prosperity Plan 2016–20. Sectoral plans are beginning to integrate the SDGs. A roadmap for implementation was also prepared for internal use.

The report refers only to the 2030 Agenda principle to leave no one behind.

Nationalising the 2030 Agenda

Namibia's Fifth National Development Plan focuses on economic progression, social transformation, environmental sustainability and good governance. National targets have been selected. According to the report, 2030 Agenda indicators and targets have been incorporated into national development planning documents.

Integration and policy coherence

The report examines all SDGs with the exception of SDG 12 on sustainable consumption and production. It provides a detailed examination with attention to the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development, though with a limited focus on environmental dimensions. References are made to applicable linkages between the dimensions of sustainable development. The report does not refer to policy coherence for sustainable development nor does it refer to international agreements that are relevant to 2030 Agenda implementation, with the exception of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness.

Means of implementation

Implementing the 2030 Agenda

The report does not identify best practice or lessons learned for Namibia. It does, however, highlight a range of challenges to 2030 Agenda implementation. These challenges include limited financial and human resource; poor quality, disaggregated data and low trust in data within society; insufficient coordination across government; and ongoing social and economic inequalities. Challenges are also presented for each goal area.

The report does not refer to how the 2030 Agenda has been integrated into budgetary processes. It notes the importance of the private sector, including foreign investments, domestic resources and international support to support 2030 Agenda implementation. The report also highlights non-financial forms of South-South and North-South cooperation, including knowledge and technology transfer as important means of implementation.

Leave no one behind

Additional data is required to leave no one behind in Namibia. The report identifies the following groups as at risk of being left behind: rural populations, including rural women and minority groups, elderly people, orphans and vulnerable children, people with disabilities, war veterans, school children and uneducated youth, marginalised communities and populations affected by hunger. According to the report, social safety nets have been key to reducing poverty and the country's social protection system is one of the most comprehensive in sub-Saharan Africa in terms of coverage. Nevertheless, efforts are needed to improve targeting and monitoring to improve efficiency in delivery. Laws, policies and programmes have been established to support gender equality. As a result of its efforts to support vulnerable groups, Namibia has seen a reduction in inequality as measured by the Gini coefficient.

Awareness raising and localisation

The report states that an extensive campaign was carried out to raise awareness of the SDGs and Namibia's Agenda 2063. National and sub-national consultations on the Fifth National Development Plan were used to sensitise stakeholders on the broader agenda. Community radio stations were also used. The government plans to translate the SDGs into local languages and continue awareness-raising efforts.

The report does not provide information on localisation efforts.

Partnership to realise the SDGs

The report emphasizes the role of all stakeholders in 2030 Agenda implementation, however, it does not provide specific examples of efforts by non-state actors.

Measurement and reporting

Namibia is developing a national indicator framework. A baseline report was developed to serve as the basis for monitoring progress. However, strengthening the statistical systems is a key challenge for monitoring implementation going forward. The report notes that the government will continue to commit resources to this effort to ensure regular data collection and monitoring of progress.

The National Monitoring Evaluation Office is responsible for reviewing progress on the SDGs as embedded in the Fifth National Development Plan. The office works in collaboration with the United Nations Development System's Coordination Unit.

Niger

In 2018, Niger 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 report says Niger uses the institutional mechanisms defined for its Sustainable Development and Inclusive Growth Strategy, Niger 2035, and its Economic and Social Development Plan 2017–21 for Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) implementation. It has started to review its governance arrangements towards the SDGs. For instance, a division for the follow-up of the SDGs has been established within the Ministry of Planning that ensures the technical coordination of the Economic and Social Development Plan 2017–21 and the SDGs.

Some of the governance arrangements put in place for the Economic and Social Development Plan 2017–21 and the SDGs include non-state actors, such as the National Coordination Committee that promotes synergy between sectors, and brings together various ministerial departments, technical and financial partners, civil society and the private sector.

Stakeholder engagement

The report does not provide information on stakeholder engagement, and no civil society report was provided for the review.

Policies

Baseline or gap analysis

Niger assessed the alignment of the SDGs with its Economic and Social Development Plan 2017–21 through a rapid integrated assessment. It also assessed SDG progress on most of the goals. For some of the SDGs, the report outlines the baseline for the SDGs, taking into account global SDG targets and indicators selected by Niger. For instance, on SDG 2 on zero hunger, the report says that severe food insecurity effects on average 5.6% of the population and chronic food insecurity affects about 14% of the population per year. On SDG 6 on clean water and sanitation, it states that only 1.25% of the rural population has access to optimal drinking water services.

Incorporating the SDGs

The report notes that the Sustainable Development and Inclusive Growth Strategy, Niger 2035, and the Economic and Social Development Plan 2017–21 are integrating the SDGs to some extent and represent the strategic reference frameworks for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It proposes to develop a comprehensive strategic framework that will cover each SDG and will be completed with a long-term action plan that takes into account SDG targets and indicators.

Nationalising the 2030 Agenda

The report indicates that Niger selected 43 targets among 100 that it prioritised, and more than 50 targets related to means of implementation and partnership. There have been 137 indicators identified for the targets selected, and both the targets and indicators seem to be aligned to the global targets and indicators.

Integration and policy coherence

The report provides a detailed examination of the six SDGs reviewed in-depth during the 2018 High-level Political Forum (SDG 6 on clean water and sanitation, SDG 7 on affordable and clean energy, SDG 11 on sustainable cities and communities, SDG 12 on responsible consumption and production, SDG 15 on life on land, and SDG 17 on partnerships for the goals), and includes a summary examination of all the goals, except SDG 14 on life below water, which the report notes is not relevant for Niger. It does not refer to policy coherence for sustainable development, and links SDG implementation to the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness.

Means of implementation

Implementing the 2030 Agenda

The report notes that a training of trainers workshop, supported by the United Nations Population Fund, was organised on the integration of the SDGs into sectoral strategic frameworks for 12 sectoral ministries and the National Institute of Statistics. The report suggests to elaborate a long-term plan for SDG implementation that would be translated into a three-year work and financing

programme to be integrated into the country's Multi-Year Economic Budgetary Programming Document.

On international public finance, the report outlines the existence of a State-Technical and Financial Partners Committee, chaired by the minister of planning. The committee seeks to ensure synergy, coordination and harmonisation of all public interventions for the implementation of the Economic and Social Development Plan 2017–21 and, consequently, the SDGs. The committee will also facilitate resource mobilisation and monitoring of the effectiveness of official development assistance.

Leave no one behind

Although the report does not clearly refer to the principle of leaving no one behind, it notes the importance of addressing the needs of vulnerable groups, vulnerable people, the most vulnerable populations, and vulnerable people affected by disasters or food crises.

The report also mentions the adoption, in 2011, of Niger's National Social Protection Policy, that seeks to, inter alia, strengthen the National Food Crisis Prevention and Management System, intensify the fight against poverty and hunger by strengthening the gender approach and paying particular attention to the most vulnerable populations, and establish social safety nets. Per the report, Niger has also adopted several laws and documents promoting gender equality, including the 2006 law on reproductive health, the 2003 law prohibiting female genital mutilation and the strategy for women's economic empowerment.

Awareness raising and localisation

Based on the report, Niger does not seem to have invested a lot on raising awareness on the SDGs to date. However, the government plans to launch a series of initiatives to strengthen stakeholder understanding of challenges to be met in order to achieve 2030 Agenda, and to develop an information and communication plan for the entire population on the SDGs.

According to the report, the Ministry in charge of Planning, in conjunction with the Ministry of Community Development and Spatial Planning, plans to propose a guide for SDG planning and monitoring that will support the integration of the SDGs into the Municipal and Regional Development Plans.

Partnership to realise the SDGs

The VNR was carried out with the support of the United Nations Development Programme and involved the collaboration of other agencies of the United Nations system, including the United Nations Children's Fund. In addition to supporting the VNR, United Nations Development Programme also helped Niger prioritise SDG targets and supported the National Institute of Statistics in developing a document on metadata for indicators related to prioritised targets.

The report underlines the important role of volunteers in the implementation of the SDGs and in development actions, particularly among vulnerable groups and local authorities. It outlines a series of initiatives undertaken by volunteers to implement the SDGs, such as a feasibility study for the construction of a solar hybrid power plant in the Commune of Agadez (SDG 7 on affordable and clean energy).

Measurement and reporting

The report notes that information is unavailable for 43% of the 137 indicators identified by the country. According to the report, the situation is most critical for SDG 2 on zero hunger, SDG 11 on sustainable cities and communities and SDG 12 on responsible consumption and production, where information is available for less than 25% of the indicators.

The report outlines a lack of disaggregated data for most SDG indicators prioritised for the country. It adds that Niger developed a National Statistical Development Strategy document in 2008, and it is in its third phase of implementation (2016–18). According to the report, Niger plans to clarify the division of labor in the collection, processing and management of data on the SDGs within the national statistical system, and to update and complete "within one year at most" the baseline situation on the targets and indicators included in its Economic and Social Development Plan. The report also suggests preparing annual implementation reports on the Economic and Social Development Plan that would focus on the SDGs.

Paraguay

In 2018, Paraguay 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

An Inter-institutional Coordination Commission for the Implementation, Monitoring and Follow-up of International Commitments assumed by the country within the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (SDGs Inter-Institutional Commission) has been created. It includes the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as the SDGs Inter-Institutional Commission coordinator, and the Ministry of Finance, the Technical Planning Secretariat and the Social Cabinet of the Presidency of the Republic. The Paraguay 2030 SDGs Inter-Institutional Commission will include three working groups aimed to coordinate the implementation of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, led by the Ministry of Finance, the Social Action Secretariat and the Environment Secretariat respectively. According to the report, these working groups are set to functioning in the second half of 2018.

Stakeholder engagement

The report does not provide information on formal processes for stakeholder engagement, including in relation to governance arrangements. Preparations for the National Development Plan included inputs from the central government, sub-national governments, civil society, the private sector and academia. The VNR gathered stakeholders coordinated by SDGs Inter-Institutional Commission, enabling civil society organisations, the private sector and "strategic allies" to collaborate in defining the scope of the report.

Policies
Baseline or gap analysis

The report does not address baseline or gap analysis. The only gap identified as part of the national situation analysis is gender inequality.

Incorporating the SDGs

The SDGs were incorporated in sectoral plans, such as the Paraguay National Housing and Habitat Policy, explicitly aimed at achieving SDG 11 on sustainable cities and communities. The National Development Plan of Paraguay, called Paraguay 2030, was aligned with the SDGs, and efforts were established to contribute to follow-up at the national level.

The human rights-based approach and leave no one behind principles of the 2030 Agenda are cross-cutting in the report.

Nationalising the 2030 Agenda

The report states that development priorities established in its National Development Plan will guide SDG implementation. Although they are not identified in the report, the statistical annex shows links between National Development Plan goals and SDGs.

Integration and policy coherence

The report does not carry out a goal-by-goal analysis but conducts a review on the Paraguayan process of policy alignment to the SDGs and the institutional developments for implementation. The three dimensions of sustainable development are addressed, but a greater focus is given to the economic area.

There are no references to policy coherence to sustainable development. However, the Paris Agreement on climate change, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda are explicitly linked to implementation at the national level.

Means of implementation
Implementing the 2030 Agenda

There is no identification of lessons learned in accelerating national implementation, but many challenges are identified related to reinforcing alignment between the National Development Plan and the 2030 Agenda, ensuring federal government institutions' ownership of the SDGs, strengthening national and local governments coordination, and supporting participatory processes for public policies planning.

Technology, trade, international public finance and systemic issues are mentioned. The effect of Paraguay's "graduation" in terms of criteria for the provision of official development assistance is

considered an obstacle in the implementation of the SDGs and criticised in the report for being based on an economic criterion that ignores development complexity. National budgetary issues are not addressed in the report.

🖐 Leave no one behind

The National Human Rights Plan of Paraguay is mentioned as the key policy guide document aimed to leave no one behind, reinforced by other legal documents such as national plans for equal opportunities for men and women and national policies on children. Currently, a National Plan for Indigenous Peoples is being developed. The country has a National Gender Strategy for Climate Change, a National Plan for Equal Opportunities between Men and Women, a law of comprehensive protection for women against all forms of gender violence and public policies aimed at addressing the needs of women deprived of liberty. Efforts are in place to guide government action towards promoting equal opportunities for men and women.

As part of national efforts to ensure that no one is left behind, indigenous peoples, people with disabilities, women, children and youth are expressly identified as vulnerable groups, supported by specialised and universal social policy programmes. For instance, the Tekoporã programme of monetary transfers to vulnerable families has been in operation since 2005. In 2015, a protocol promoting the inclusion of indigenous families in Tekoporã was adopted, and its coverage was extended to people with severe disabilities.

> **BEST PRACTICE SPOTLIGHT**
> **Paraguay has developed strong systems of accountability to children and adolescents over the past ten years. Recognising the human rights of girls, boys and adolescents, Paraguay seeks to foster a culture of accountability from childhood. A National Secretariat exists for children and adolescents. Administrative, political and pedagogical processes facilitate the provision of information on the use of public resources for projects that benefit young people to children and adolescents in accessible ways. Methodologies are used that promote protagonist participation (participation that enables individuals to have power over outcomes), the right to public information and the right to petition authorities.**

📡 Awareness raising and localisation

Local governments design local development plans aligned with the National Development Plan and the SDGs and have established multistakeholder district and departmental development councils. So far, 244 district councils and 17 departmental councils have been created.

These works are complemented by awareness-raising activities like SDGs socialisation seminars, stakeholders' forums of debate and workshops with public institutions.

✪ Partnership to realise the SDGs

District and departmental development councils are the main bodies responsible for SDGs implementation at the local level and must bring together government and non-government stakeholders. In 2017, presidents of the executive, legislative and judicial branches of Paraguay signed a joint declaration on working together to implement and follow-up the 2030 Agenda. The Paraguay Global Compact is mentioned as an implementation partner, contributing to business strategies and SDG alignment, supporting public policies and mobilising financial resources.

The United Nations Development Programme recruited a consultant team to support the VNR and report preparation, while the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations supported the design of national indicators. United Nations Women contributed a gender-perspective to the VNR.

📋 Measurement and reporting

Twenty percent of the global SDGs indicators are produced at the national level, and another 19% could be built with information already available. The possibility of disaggregating available indicators has been evaluated, concluding that most of them can be followed at territorial level (national-local and urban-rural disaggregation). However, Paraguay lacks data disaggregation capacities, affecting national implementation follow-up.

To overcome this obstacle, a report annex presents an SDG Inter-institutional Commission Road Map, identifying five steps to be taken from July 2018–23 to strengthen national statistical capacities such as the preparation of national SDG indicators and continuous updating; technical training; capacity improvement efforts; coordination of international efforts related to statistics; strengthening the General Directorate of Statistics, Surveys and Censuses of Paraguay capacities; and the establishment of a national statistical system and a National Statistics Institute. Information on national reporting is not presented.

Poland

In 2018, Poland 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 Ministry of Entrepreneurship and Technology is responsible for coordination of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development implementation. Overall development objectives are defined by the Council of Ministers under the leadership of the prime minister. In preparing for the VNR, Poland established a task force for the Coherence of the Strategy for Responsible Development by 2020 with the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Task force members include government institutions, local and regional governments, social organisations, civil society, academia, youth, public statistics, trade unions and employers' organisations, United Nations agencies and others. The task force is responsible for selecting national priorities, ensuring a participatory VNR, information exchange and monitoring progress on implementation. The task force is part of the Coordination Committee for Development Policy, which serves as the central platform for monitoring implementation of Poland's development strategy. Ministerial coordinators also exist, responsible for specific SDGs.

💬 Stakeholder engagement

Poland has a National Stakeholder Forum for the implementation of the SDGs. Non-state actors have been engaged in the selection of national priorities and the VNR, notably through the task force outlined above. A draft version of the report was also made available for public consultation.

GOOD PRACTICE SPOTLIGHT
In addition to the creation of a task force with non-state actor representation to facilitate the VNR, Poland's VNR included a number of opportunities for broad public consultation. Over a three-week period in April 2018, the VNR report underwent inter-ministerial and public consultations. The public consultations included online and offline elements. A dedicated

form was available for stakeholders to submit comments through the government website that hosted a draft version of the report. The government also purposefully submitted the draft report to social partners to solicit their feedback. A draft version of the report was also submitted to local government institutions as well as a Social Dialogue Council for review. Selected parliamentary committees also reviewed the draft report.

Policies

〰 Baseline or gap analysis

The report includes a review of how Poland fares against a number of international SDG rankings. A national analysis was also carried out with experts assessing Poland's starting point for 2030 Agenda implementation, alignment between national policies and the 2030 Agenda, and data constraints. Areas where alignment is the greatest between the SDGs and Poland's Strategy for Responsible Development include education, participation, social inclusion, economic growth and innovation, financial services, infrastructure, research and development, entrepreneurship (including small- and medium-sized enterprises), employment, sustainable agriculture, industry, adaptation to climate change, and pollution. The review found that there is less coherence on development cooperation, global cooperation for sustainable development and marine ecosystems. Data constraints are most present for SDG 12 on sustainable consumption and production, SDG 13 on climate action, SDG 15 on life on land and SDG 17 on partnerships for the goals.

☑ Incorporating the SDGs

Adopted in 2017, the Strategy for Responsible Development outlines Poland's priorities for social and economic development by 2020 with a view to 2030. The strategy supports implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The report refers to the 2030 Agenda principles of leaving no one behind and inter-generational responsibility.

Nationalising the 2030 Agenda

The report indicates that Poland's priorities include the reduction of social exclusion, poverty and social inequalities; improvements in quality of life; education and improvement of competences; and improved health care. Partnerships across stakeholders is also important. The report sums up Poland's three priorities as sustainable economic growth driven by knowledge, data and organisational excellence; socially sensitive and territorially sustainable development; and effective institutions contributing to growth. Poland has selected national indicators as part of its Strategy for Responsible Development.

Integration and policy coherence

The report provides a summary examination of all SDGs. While all dimensions of sustainable development are noted, there is less of a focus on the environment and limited references to linkages between goals. Poland works to avoid actions that will have a negative effect on global development in its approach to policy coherence for sustainable development. The government also plans to jointly establish development cooperation policies with national development strategies after 2020. In terms of relevant international agreements and frameworks that support 2030 Agenda implementation, only the Paris Agreement on climate change is mentioned.

Means of implementation
Implementing the 2030 Agenda

The report notes Poland's approach to partnership (see good practice box) is a form of best practice. It does not refer to lessons learned, overall challenges to implementation or learning from peers. The Strategy for Responsible Development includes a cost estimate and sources of finance have been identified, namely, national and European Union public funds, other foreign sources of finance and private funds. The report highlights Poland's increasing commitment to official development assistance, efforts to address illicit financial flows and efforts to improve the export position of the country's small- and medium-sized enterprises.

Leave no one behind

The Strategy for Responsible Development identifies families with many children, single-parent families, children and youth (in particular those with disabilities) and families where at least one caregiver is unemployed as at risk of poverty. The status of data to leave no one behind is unclear from the report. Poland uses existing specialised and universal programmes to support vulnerable populations, including minimum wage increases, support for accessible living and provisions for families such as early childhood education and efforts to combat violence in the family. Poland has a National Action Programme for Equal Treatment to support gender equality and a National Strategy for Regional Development to address regional inequalities.

Awareness raising and localisation

The report does not provide information on awareness-raising beyond the partnership initiative noted below. It states that inclusion of local and regional levels of government (and their associations) in the task force guiding 2030 Agenda implementation has helped to embed the SDGs at the local level.

Partnership to realise the SDGs

In 2017, the Partnership for the Implementation of the SDGs in Poland was launched with the aim of encouraging commitments and efforts by stakeholders across sectors. The partnership works to raise awareness of the 2030 Agenda and the need for cooperation across sectors. Signatories to the partnership showcase their efforts as a means to inspire others.

GOOD PRACTICE SPOTLIGHT
The report emphasizes inclusive policy-making and the creation of spaces for systemic exchange of knowledge, information and good practices. The country also takes a project approach to implementing 2030 Agenda initiatives. The approach sets milestones and makes use of participatory models of cooperation.

Measurement and reporting

There is little information on monitoring and reporting in the report. An assessment of data availability, including disaggregated data, is not included though the main SDGs for which data constraints exist are noted. The government plans to refine SDG indicators going forward. No information is presented on plans for national reporting on 2030 Agenda implementation.

Qatar

In 2018, Qatar submitted its second voluntary national review (VNR) report to the United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. Qatar submitted its first report in 2017.

Governance and institutional mechanisms

Leadership, governance and institutions

The 2018 report provides a diagram of the institutional mechanisms for 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development implementation with very little text. Reviewing the 2018 report in isolation, leadership and implementation mechanisms are unclear. However, the 2017 report noted the creation of a supervisory committee representing all ministries, an advisory committee representing government, non-governmental organisations and the private sector, and eight national task teams that were created to develop sector strategies representing ministries, other government institutions, the private sector, civil society organisations and others. The 2018 report includes the Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics, Department for Follow-up (monitoring) of the National Development Strategy and Sustainable Development Agenda 2030 Implementation, and departments of planning and quality control at various ministries as part of implementation mechanisms.

Stakeholder engagement

The report does not provide details on stakeholder engagement. According to the 2017 report, non-state actors were engaged in identifying priorities through the national task teams. The 2018 report was prepared by a working group that included representation by government and civil society organisations.

Policies

Baseline or gap analysis

The report does not include baseline or gap analysis.

Incorporating the SDGs

According to the report, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have been incorporated into the second National Development Strategy for the 2018–22 period. Qatar adopted sustainable

development as a strategic choice in Qatar National Vision 2030. The report makes no mention of 2030 Agenda principles.

Nationalising the 2030 Agenda

National priorities include improving the lives of all social groups of citizens and expatriates including in areas such as education, employment, health, housing and transport. The National Development Strategy also works to advance issues related to social inclusion. Performance indicators for the National Development Strategy have been established and will be used for monitoring going forward.

Integration and policy coherence

The report includes a detailed review of the 2018 High-level Political Forum theme goals: SDG 6 on clean water and sanitation, SDG 7 on affordable and clean energy, SDG 11 on sustainable cities and communities, SDG 12 on responsible consumption and production, SDG 15 on life on land and SDG 17 on partnerships for the goals. All dimensions of sustainable development are captured, however, there is a greater focus on the environment (which is in contrast to 2017 when the report had a limited focus on environmental dimensions). References are also made to linkages between economic, social and environmental dimensions in the goal-by-goal analysis, unlike in the 2017 report. The 2018 report also mentions the Paris Agreement on climate change and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda while the 2017 report did not.

Means of implementation

Implementing the 2030 Agenda

Unlike in 2017, the 2018 report does not include information on best practices and general challenges for 2030 Agenda implementation (though the report does include specific challenges related to the goals examined).

The report highlights efforts to build science and technology infrastructure and invest in human capital. With respect to capacity

development, the report notes investments in education to support the capacity of citizens to engage in 2030 Agenda implementation.

Qatar's official development assistance amounted to US $2 billion in 2017. The country also promotes international trade within the context of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development approach.

The report does not include information on costing domestic implementation and budgeting. It does, however, note that government institutions are expected to allocate necessary resources in accordance with an agreed timeline.

✋ Leave no one behind

The report does not refer to the principle of leaving no one behind. However, it consistently mentions women, children, elderly and people with disabilities as part of social inclusion efforts. The report refers to strengthened social protection systems and efforts in housing that benefit all people. According to the report, "the promotion and protection of the rights of persons with disabilities is a top priority for Qatar through its ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities" (p. 38).

📡 Awareness raising and localisation

The report does not mention awareness-raising activities or efforts to localise the 2030 Agenda.

🔗 Partnership to realise the SDGs

While the report mentions the importance of the private sector, civil society and higher education institutions in 2030 Agenda implementation, it provides very few examples of concrete partnerships. One example of a research partnership in the energy sector is provided. With respect to civil society, the report outlines efforts by civil society and United Nations agencies to host the 2016 Arab Conference on the Role of Civil Society in the Implementation of the Goals of the 2030 Agenda.

📋 Measurement and reporting

The report does not provide an overview of data gaps, though it notes that gaps in renewable energy data exist. A roadmap has been prepared to strengthen the national statistical system. It includes an evaluation of existing capacities, a data-availability assessment, preparation of a national plan (and sectoral plans) to produce indicators for 2030 Agenda monitoring, and preparation of a national database, to be updated periodically.

According to the report, dashboards will be used for reporting as well as periodic annual, semi-annual and quarterly reports. Periodic reports will be submitted to the Council of Ministers.

Romania

In 2018, Romania 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 responsibility for sustainable development is shared between the Inter-ministerial Committee for the Coordination of the Integration of Environmental Protection into Sectoral Policies and Strategies at the National Level and the Department for Sustainable Development. The committee is under the leadership of the Minister of Environment while the Department for Sustainable Development is led by a State Counsellor under the Prime Minister's Office.

💬 Stakeholder engagement

The report does not provide information on formal mechanisms for stakeholder engagement. It does, however, note that non-state actors are involved in efforts to revise the national sustainable development strategy. Non-state actors were engaged in the VNR through a working group that included government institutions, civil society representatives and academia.

Policies

Baseline or gap analysis

The report makes no mention of baseline or gap analysis.

✅ Incorporating the SDGs

Romania is in the process of revising its National Sustainable Development Strategy. The revision will further incorporate sustainability issues to directly or indirectly support realising the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The report refers to the universal, human rights-based nature of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the need to ensure inter-generational responsibility and leave no one behind.

📡 Nationalising the 2030 Agenda

National priorities have not yet been selected in light of the ongoing revision to the National Sustainable Development Strategy. However,

Romania is updating its sustainable development indicator set and is in the process of selecting indicators to address Romania's specific needs and priorities.

> **GOOD PRACTICE SPOTLIGHT**
> **Romania is working to include nationally relevant indicators in SDG monitoring. The government is carrying out a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization project, "Culture for Development Indicators," which contributes to implementation of the 2005 Convention for the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. The project includes design and analysis of 22 indicators that reflect the contributions of culture to development. The indicators assess the contribution of culture to sustainable development in a number of policy areas including the economy, education, governance, social participation, gender equality, communication and heritage. The 22 indicators correlate with nine SDGs and 36 targets.**

⚙ Integration and policy coherence

The report provides a detailed examination of the six SDGs reviewed in-depth during the 2018 High-level Political Forum (SDG 6 on clean water and sanitation, SDG 7 on affordable and clean energy, SDG 11 on sustainable cities and communities, SDG 12 on responsible consumption and production, SDG 15 on life on land and SDG 17 on partnerships for the goals). The report gives equal attention to all dimensions of sustainable development and refers to linkages between them. To ensure policy coherence in implementation, Romania aims to maintain political commitment, provide appropriate strategic direction, establish effective coordination and dedicated groups of experts at all levels of government and inspire efforts by stakeholders across society. Romania's report refers to the Paris

Agreement on climate change as well as the 2011 Busan agreement on effective development cooperation.

Means of implementation
Implementing the 2030 Agenda

Romania highlights its use of multi-disciplinary approaches to addressing policy issues as a form of best practice, particularly in terms of drawing on expert advice and supporting collaboration among experts. Working with experts to incorporate sustainable development into policies is also a lesson learned. Ensuring broad participation in implementation and effective monitoring are also highlighted as lessons learned. Budgeting, costing and financing for the 2030 Agenda are not articulated in the report. Romania highlighted its commitment to reach 0.33% official development assistance to gross national income by 2030 and efforts in terms of technology transfer and capacity development for partner countries.

Leave no one behind

Romania's efforts to leave no one behind appear to be informed by existing data and baselines. According to the report, people living in rural areas, Roma communities, children, the elderly and people with disabilities are most at risk of being left behind. The report showcases specific strategies and initiatives to support vulnerable groups and notes that Romania has a goal of reducing the number of people at risk of poverty by 580,000 by 2020 under the country's National Strategy on Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction 2015–20 and corresponding Strategic Action Plan. The report refers largely to legal frameworks in support of gender equality.

Awareness raising and localisation

Romania has raised awareness of the 2030 Agenda through national, multi-stakeholder conferences and regional seminars. The Department for Sustainable Development also organised a competition to hear students' feedback on sustainable development.

The report does not provide information on the status of localisation.

Partnership to realise the SDGs

The report notes the importance of multi-stakeholder contributions to 2030 Agenda implementation and provides some examples. In 2015, Romania's parliament created a Sub-committee for Sustainable Development. In 2016, a declaration was adopted by the parliament showing its support for the 2030 Agenda. A similar sub-committee also exists in the lower house of the parliament. The report includes reference to a range of initiatives and partnerships

with civil society, though it does not provide examples of contributions from the private sector and academia.

Measurement and reporting

The report does not provide information on data availability or efforts to improve data availability. National reporting is not presented, however, the report includes reference to future reports to the High-level Political Forum.

> **GOOD PRACTICE SPOTLIGHT**
> **Romania's report includes a presentation of when the country will report to the High-level Political Forum. VNRs are planned for 2023 and 2029.**

Saudi Arabia

In 2018, Saudi Arabia 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 Ministry of Economy and Planning is responsible for follow-up on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The ministry supports government institutions and other stakeholders in strategic planning, policy alignment and implementation. A national commission was set up to support implementation of SDG 4 on quality education.

The report notes Saudi Arabia's engagement on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through the G20 and the League of Arab States.

Stakeholder engagement

The report does not provide information on formal mechanisms for stakeholder engagement. According to the report, the VNR was conducted through a participatory approach, including engagement with government institutions, the private sector, and charitable societies and associations.

Policies

Baseline or gap analysis

Saudi Arabia made use of the United Nations Development Programme's Rapid Integrated Assessment Tool to examine alignment between the country's overarching strategy, Vision 2030, and the SDGs. The report notes that there is significant alignment between the national strategy and the SDGs.

Incorporating the SDGs

The 2030 Agenda has been incorporated into some policies and strategies, including the Water Strategy, Environment Strategy and National Spatial Strategy. The SDGs are also being integrated into education curricula. The report notes that incorporation of the 2030 Agenda into policies and strategies is an ongoing process and that SDG targets and indicators will be incorporated into detailed action plans and programmes.

The report does not refer to any principles of the 2030 Agenda.

Nationalising the 2030 Agenda

Saudi Arabia's national priorities include a vibrant society, a thriving economy and an ambitious nation. A vibrant society includes living in accordance with the Islamic principle of moderation, cherishing national identity and the country's cultural heritage, and a strong family system supported by health and social care. To support the economy, the report notes priorities including creating opportunities in different economic sectors, raising the quality of development and economic services through privatisation, and attracting international investments and expertise. The report highlights efforts to improve the effectiveness of government and cultivate responsible citizens to build an ambitious nation. Saudi Arabia has aligned its performance indicators with the SDGs and plans to establish proxy indicators.

Integration and policy coherence

The report provides a detailed examination of all SDGs with a greater focus on economic dimensions of sustainable development and limited references to the linkages between the dimensions. Policy coherence for sustainable development is provided by the long-term vision for the country. The report mentions the Paris Agreement on climate change.

Means of implementation

Implementing the 2030 Agenda

The report notes the importance of taking into account national priorities and realities, early collaboration on policies with appropriate means of implementation and having a clear long-term vision as lessons learned in 2030 Agenda implementation. Economic diversification is noted as a means to support a range of SDGs. Efforts to improve public-sector performance are also highlighted.

Challenges to 2030 Agenda implementation include data availability, statistical system strengthening, coordination across public and private sectors, building from existing institutional frameworks and localisation.

In terms of supporting the SDGs globally, the report emphasizes Saudi Arabia's generosity as a provider of concessionary aid and favourable development assistance having surpassed the 0.7% of official development assistance to gross national income ratio. Saudi Arabia also ranks second in terms of labour cash transfers (remittances) in the world.

Leave no one behind

Although the report does not clearly refer to the principle of leaving no one behind, it identifies persons with disabilities, women and children as vulnerable groups. Efforts to leave no one behind are informed by existing data.

Saudi Arabia provides financial support to low- and middle-income households that may be at risk due to economic policies pursued by the government. The government has established a number of policies, programmes and institutions to support persons with disabilities. Cash assistance is provided to families of persons with disabilities, a national strategy for the rights of persons with disabilities is being developed, and an umbrella commission for persons with disabilities is being established. The government is planning a social protection strategy, is working to increase women's participation in the labour market as well as protect women and children from all forms of abuse.

Awareness raising and localisation

Efforts to raise awareness of the SDGs and localise implementation are not included in the report.

Partnership to realise the SDGs

The report notes that the Ministry of Economy and Planning promotes participation in 2030 Agenda implementation by the private sector, charitable societies and associations. It provides examples of specific projects supported by charitable organisations, the private sector, foundations and academia.

Measurement and reporting

The report does not provide information on data availability, including disaggregated data. Nevertheless, it does note that data availability has improved and that there is a need to improve methodologies and data collection systems, build capacity in the statistical system, better coordination between data producers and users, develop administrative records, boost statistical knowledge in society and improve dissemination.

The report promises regular reviews of implementation with a focus on identifying good practices and challenges. The government plans to strengthen systems for monitoring and reporting regularly, particularly at the local level.

Senegal

In 2018, Senegal 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 report indicates that an ad hoc technical committee under the Ministry of Economy, Finance and Planning was established to oversee the VNR technical process and to ensure Senegal's effective participation in the 2018 High-level Political Forum. It is unclear, however, if this committee has an official role to play regarding Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) implementation. The report also states that the Ministry of Economy, Finance and Planning will have to ensure coherence between the SDGs and Phase II of the Plan for an Emerging Senegal (2019–23).

Stakeholder engagement

The report notes that the Civil Society Working Group under the Council of Non-Governmental Organisations for Development Support conducted consultations on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in several regions and collaborative workshops were organised. The Platform of Civil Society Organisations for Monitoring the SDGs also produced a civil society report related to SDG implementation. Outcomes of these initiatives were included in Senegal's report to the High-level Political Forum, the report says. Furthermore, stakeholders were invited to review the draft of the report, and amendments and recommendations resulting from the workshop were incorporated.

Policies

Baseline or gap analysis

An assessment was carried out to examine the alignment between the Plan for an Emerging Senegal 2014–18 and the SDGs. The report also assesses in detail the 17 SDGs and identifies baselines as well as gaps for each of the goals based on SDG targets and indicators.

Incorporating the SDGs

Per the report, the Plan for an Emerging Senegal 2014–18, which serves as a frame of reference for economic and social policy, integrates about 77% of the SDG targets and 62% of the SDG indicators.

The report notes that the second phase of Plan (2019–23) should address all the SDG national priorities. The report refers to "intra- and intergenerational solidarity" and "ethics of the future," but does not include a dedicated chapter on leaving no one behind. However, the principle is mentioned a few times in the text.

Nationalising the 2030 Agenda

The report identifies SDG priorities for all the 17 SDGs, except SDG 12 on responsible consumption and production. Priorities are defined through national targets, with the most targets being related to SDG 3 on good health and well-being, SDG 8 on decent work and economic growth and SDG 17 on partnerships for the goals.

Integration and policy coherence

The report makes limited reference to linkages between the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development in its analysis of SDG progress. However, the Ecovillages programme that it refers to offers a good example of integration.

BEST PRACTICE SPOTLIGHT
In Senegal, the "Ecovillages" Programme is testing innovative participatory approaches for natural resource management, biodiversity conservation and renewable energy development, combined with a reduction in carbon emissions and an increase in carbon sequestration. According to the report, Senegal has about 500 Ecovillages overseen by the National Ecovillages Agency, whose mission is to oversee the transition process of 14,000 traditional villages to Ecovillages by 2020, with support from development partners.

The civil society report notes that the programme generated more than 3,000 direct jobs in 2016, two-thirds of which benefited women.

A harmonised framework for the monitoring and evaluation of public policies, chaired by the head of state, has been put in place to

ensure coherence for sustainable development. The report links SDG implementation to the Paris Agreement on climate change, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, as well as aid effectiveness and development effectiveness agreements.

Means of implementation

⟳ Implementing the 2030 Agenda

Implementation challenges identified by Senegal include strengthening SDG capacity of governmental study and planning units, and of all stakeholders to implement and monitor the SDGs; strengthening national systems for data production and analysis; mobilising financial resources, including internal resources; and coordinating and strengthening dialogue with development actors.

In a discussion on trade, the report notes that the objective of the Plan for an Emerging Senegal is to increase the share of Senegal's exports. The report also notes that efforts to finance the plan will be used to finance the SDGs. The report points to the fact that developed countries committed to devote at least 0.7% of their gross national income to financing development in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. It also adds that measures will have to be taken to diversify funding sources, including through South-South cooperation, foreign direct investment and public-private partnerships.

✋ Leave no one behind

The report notes that young people, women, persons with disabilities, people living with HIV/AIDS and the elderly are amongst the most vulnerable people. It outlines universal and existing specialised programmes to leave no one behind as well as initiatives that aim to combat social inequalities and improve the socio-economic conditions of vulnerable households. Those include, for example, the National Family Security Grant Programme, the Universal Health Coverage Programme and the Equal Opportunities Card, inter alia.

On reducing domestic inequalities and realising gender equality, the report indicates the existence of the National Strategy for Gender Equity and Equality, and of a Ministry of Women, the Family and Children. The country's 2001 constitution affirms equal access to land for men and women, and the government has created "Gender Cells," that serve as focal points of the Ministry of Women in other sectoral ministries. It calls for the identification of people left behind through quantitative and perception surveys.

⊚ Awareness raising and localisation

According to the report, Senegal commits to encourage participation of grassroots community organisations, involve community radio stations in supporting communication during the formulation and implementation of public policies integrating the SDGs, and translate all the SDGs into its national languages. The report also indicates that the SDGs will be aligned with local development plans, adding that Senegal has set up a national platform for local planning that should work on converting the SDGs into a local planning guide.

BEST PRACTICE SPOTLIGHT
The civil society report notes that the Association of Mayors of Senegal mandated experts, in 2017, to carry out studies on various themes related to the SDGs. The studies sought to help local elected officials make the most appropriate decisions, ensure coherence in local development policies and increase SDG ownership with a view to promote local development.

♺ Partnership to realise the SDGs

The report includes limited information related to partnerships. It calls on development partners to provide financial support and more technical assistance.

🗒 Measurement and reporting

According to the report, nearly 62% of the SDG global indicators "comply" with Senegal's current indicators system and the country is able to provide information on 68.5% of the SDG indicators. The report specifies that socio-economic indicators that were used to follow-up on the Millennium Development Goals are the ones for which there is more data, while governance and environment indicators are the least well documented.

According to the report, a main constraint for SDG implementation is data availability. Senegal plans to produce more data through household surveys, and to train managers and technicians in statistics.

On reporting, Senegal indicates that the institutional framework for SDG monitoring is linked to the harmonised framework for the monitoring and evaluation of public policies, which comprises the production of annual synthesis reports by a Joint Annual Review of Economic and Social Policy, and sectoral, regional and thematic reports. Per the report, a report focusing specifically on progress made in the implementation of the SDGs will be prepared in addition to thematic reports. The report also calls for the contribution of all levels (state and sub-national levels) to monitor progress.

Singapore

In 2018, Singapore 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 is not clear on leadership for 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development implementation. An inter-ministry committee on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) was established for the VNR and thereafter. At the regional level, the report highlights Singapore's contributions to the 2030 Agenda through the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

Stakeholder engagement

The report does not provide information on formal mechanisms for stakeholder engagement. Non-state actors were engaged in the VNR through regular meetings and non-state actors hosted events on the 2030 Agenda, in which government representatives participated.

Policies

Baseline or gap analysis

The report makes no mention of baseline or gap analysis.

Incorporating the SDGs

The report does not provide information on how the 2030 Agenda has been incorporated into national policies and approaches. It refers to 2030 Agenda principles of inter-generational responsibility and leaving no one behind.

Nationalising the 2030 Agenda

National priorities for 2030 Agenda implementation are not listed in the report. The report indicates that Singapore is using the global indicators and has not developed national targets and indicators.

Integration and policy coherence

The report provides a detailed examination of all SDGs with equal attention to all dimensions of sustainable development and the inter-linkages between them. While the report does not refer to policy coherence for sustainable development, it does emphasize a whole-of-government approach to addressing challenges. Government institutions assess challenges from multiple perspectives with the aim of understanding the impact of their policies on other policy areas. The report refers to the Paris Agreement on climate change, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

Means of implementation

Implementing the 2030 Agenda

The key challenges to 2030 Agenda implementation include Singapore's aging population, the need for continuous skills upgrading in light of technological advances and addressing competing priorities for sustainable development given the limited size of the country. The report highlights Singapore's contributions through the Singapore Cooperation Programme which provides technical assistance. Singapore also participates in triangular cooperation and offers a range of capacity development programmes.

Leave no one behind

People with disabilities, and low-income families and individuals are at risk of being left behind in Singapore. Efforts to leave no one behind are informed by existing data. The report points to social safety nets as the key means to leave no one behind, with supports for elderly people, low-wage workers, public housing, special needs education and affordable health care (with subsidies for lower income individuals). The report emphasizes legal means to ensure gender equality, including leave for new parents, as well as efforts to improve women's representation on boards and women's health. The report also included information on the results of efforts to improve equality.

GOOD PRACTICE SPOTLIGHT
Singapore reported on income inequality. The country has seen impressive income growth for those in the lowest 10%. Their real per capita household income increased 30.2% between 2007 and 2017. The 20th percentile of full-time employed residents saw income growth of 4.2% per annum in real terms over 2012–17.

Awareness raising and localisation

Singapore has made use of public education initiatives to raise awareness of the 2030 Agenda. The government is making use of individual champions and word-of-mouth to sensitise the public on SDG issues. A challenge identified in the report is raising awareness to support behavioural change and promote individual and collective actions on the 2030 Agenda.

The report does not provide information on the status of localisation.

Partnership to realise the SDGs

Specific examples of partnerships with non-state actors to support 2030 Agenda implementation are highlighted throughout the report. Singapore launched a Sustainable Development Programme in 2015 to support partner countries' implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The programme works in partnership with civil society and United Nations agencies. The report also highlights projects with the private sector, academia and the United Nations.

Measurement and reporting

The report provides no information on measurement, reporting and follow-up for the 2030 Agenda.

Slovakia

In 2018, Slovakia 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

Slovakia established a Government Council of the Slovak Republic for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to coordinate implementation. Chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister for Investments and Informatization, the council includes government institutions, regional administration, cities and municipalities, employers, trade unions, academia, non-governmental organisations and government advisory bodies. The council is responsible for policy development at national and regional levels, and for monitoring progress. While the Deputy Prime Minister for Investments and Informatization is responsible for national dimensions of 2030 Agenda implementation, the deputy chairman, a position held by the Minister of Foreign and European Affairs, is responsible for international dimensions. The council is supported by a Working Group for the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the preparation of the National Investment Plan of the Slovak Republic for 2018–30. The working group has two chambers: the Government Chamber includes representatives from government while the Chamber of Stakeholders includes non-governmental actors.

> **GOOD PRACTICE SPOTLIGHT**
> **Slovakia has included a wide range of stakeholders in the governance structures for 2030 Agenda implementation, including at the oversight and working levels.**

Stakeholder engagement

The report does not provide information on formal mechanisms for stakeholder engagement beyond governance structures. It notes that non-state actors contributed to the selection of national priorities and the VNR.

Policies

Baseline or gap analysis

The government made use of analysis by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development to assess baselines. Through the VNR, existing data and indicators were also assessed. The report includes a discussion of gaps throughout. The main outcome of the analysis was contributing to the selection of national priorities.

Incorporating the SDGs

Slovakia has a roadmap for 2030 Agenda implementation. Adopted in 2017, the roadmap sets out the steps to fully integrate the 2030 Agenda into policies, planning and governance frameworks. The report refers to the 2030 Agenda principles of universality and leaving no on behind.

Nationalising the 2030 Agenda

Slovakia has selected the following priorities and noted related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for 2030 Agenda implementation:

- education (incorporating SDG 4 on quality education, SDG 8 on decent work and economic growth, and SDG 10 on reduced inequalities);

- environmentally sustainable and knowledge-based economy (SDG 7 on affordable and clean energy, SDG 8 on decent work and economic growth, SDG 9 on industry, innovation and infrastructure, SDG 10 on reduced inequalities and SDG 12 on sustainable consumption and production);

- poverty reduction and social inclusion (SDG 1 on no poverty, SDG 2 on zero hunger and SDG 10 on reduced inequalities);

- sustainability of settlements, regions and countryside in the context of climate change (SDG 6 on clean water and sanitation, SDG 7 on affordable and clean energy, SDG 11 on sustainable cities and communities, SDG 13 on climate change and SDG 15 on life on land);

- rule of law, democracy and security (SDG 5 on gender equality and SDG 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions); and

- good health (SDG 3 on good health and well-being and SDG 10 on reduced inequalities).

The report lists developing targets and indicators based on these priorities as a next step.

⚙ Integration and policy coherence

The report provides a summary analysis of country priorities for 2030 Agenda implementation. There is no goal-by-goal analysis, though the report pays equal attention to economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. The central tool to achieve policy coherence for sustainable development will be a national development strategy. The report does not refer to international agreements or frameworks that support implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Means of implementation
🔁 Implementing the 2030 Agenda

The report highlights best practices for each of the country's national priorities in the form of government initiatives. Slovakia noted that it would like to learn about approaches and tools used by other countries to implement the SDGs.

Slovakia has not integrated the SDGs into investment plans, however, the country plans to establish a national investment plan that will be directly linked to its six national priorities. With respect to working with partner countries, the report notes efforts by Slovakia to build capacity in the energy sector in Afghanistan.

✋ Leave no one behind

Roma people, persons with disabilities and the elderly are at risk of social exclusion in Slovakia. Efforts to leave no one behind require additional data, particularly to understand income inequality. According to the report, Slovakia is focusing on opportunities for positive social mobility through education, employment and health-related initiatives. Efforts to reduce gender equality are not articulated in the report.

📡 Awareness raising and localisation

The report outlines the comprehensive approach to selecting national priorities for 2030 Agenda implementation and the use of business awards to raise awareness. There is no information on the status of localisation.

✖ Partnership to realise the SDGs

The report emphasizes the importance placed on partnership by the government. "Slovakia is therefore dedicated to sustain an enabling environment for the creation of partnerships" (p. 9). The government plans to increase involvement by parliament and civil society. It will also carry out a microgranting scheme that will support microprojects implemented by local communities, schools and civil society as a means to encourage voluntary actions by citizens. The government is also making use of awards for volunteers and business.

📋 Measurement and reporting

While the report does not provide information on overall data availability, it does note that additional disaggregated data is needed to better understand inequality. In terms of reporting on progress, Slovakia plans to use a biannual monitoring scheme to ensure continuous reporting and evaluation. A report will be issued in mid-2020.

Spain

In 2018, Spain 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

Spain has set up a number of structures to support 2030 Agenda
for Sustainable Development implementation. These include a
high commissioner for the 2030 Agenda who is supported by a
directorate general and reports directly to the president and the High
Commissioner for Child Poverty. Inter-ministerial coordination occurs
through a high-level group that includes all ministries, and regional
and local entities. The High Level Group is a working group of the
Delegate Commission for Economic Affairs, which has authority
on issues related to the economic sphere and is chaired by the
President. The High-Level Group is supported by a Standing Working
Group that provides technical and operational support. According to
the report, the government will establish a Sustainable Development
Council to ensure consultation with non-state actors including
representatives from universities, civil society, the private sector,
trade unions and experts.

Stakeholder engagement

The main mechanisms for stakeholder engagement outlined in the
report include the Sustainable Development Council, noted above,
and the creation of a platform for knowledge and information
sharing, learning and mobilization of stakeholders across Spain.
Stakeholders will be able to share their 2030 Agenda commitments.
Information on stakeholder consultation and the identification of
national priorities are provided in the report. A civil society report
was prepared by Futuro en Común, a civil society umbrella platform.

Policies

Baseline or gap analysis

According to the report, the VNR prompted an assessment of the
Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in terms of policies and data.
The mapping examined efforts by ministries, diagnosed progress
and baselines for each SDG target, identified challenges and
constraints, and examined the main stakeholders involved. A public

access database was created from this assessment that shows how
the SDGs match to government ministries and policies. Non-state
actors also prepared position papers. In terms of progress on the
SDGs, Spain has identified "accelerator priorities" to address gaps,
discussed below.

Incorporating the SDGs

Spain has developed an action plan for 2030 Agenda
implementation. According to the report, the government plans to
establish a Sustainable Development Strategy 2020–30. The report
refers only to the 2030 Agenda principle of leaving no one behind.

Nationalising the 2030 Agenda

National priorities and indicators have been developed. The report
identifies national SDG implementation "accelerator" policies and
areas: preventing and combating poverty, inequality and social
exclusion; the Equality of Opportunities Strategic Plan; Spain's Urban
Agenda; the circular economy; the Climate Change and Energy
Transition Act; Scientific and Technical Research for the SDGs; The
Social Economy Strategy 2017–20; the Open Government Plan; and
efforts to bolster Spanish Cooperation to support the SDGs.

Integration and policy coherence

The report provides a detailed examination of all SDGs with equal
attention to economic, social and environmental dimensions and
reference to applicable linkages between dimensions.

The report stresses the importance of policy coherence for
sustainable development. The report defines policy coherence for
sustainable development according to the definition provided by
the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development:
"Alignment of public policies with the SDGs—that is, [policy
coherence for sustainable development]—takes place in three
areas: in domestic actions, to advance the SDGs in Spain; through
the international cooperation that Spain undertakes to support
third countries in their own efforts; and by ensuring that domestic
efforts do not have negative external impacts on other countries
or on achievement of global public goods" (p. 87). To realise policy

coherence for sustainable development, the government proposes to have an SDG impact analysis for legislative initiatives, to increase the impacts of Spanish foreign policy, and include analysis of policy coherence for sustainable development in the Spanish parliament's accountability mechanism and progress reports on the 2030 Agenda.

Means of implementation
Implementing the 2030 Agenda

The report notes difficulties in relation to realising progress on SDG 17 on partnerships for the goals. In particular, challenges include ensuring comprehensive application of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, developing a system for 2030 Agenda monitoring, preparing an integrated framework on the means of implementation, and improving the institutional architecture to realise policy coherence for sustainable development.

The SDGs are currently not included in the national budget, however, as a next step, Spain plans to pilot a methodology by 2019 to align the general state budget with the SDGs for implementation in 2020.

Leave no one behind

The report consistently provides data on vulnerable groups, including disaggregation according to multiple characteristics, such as ability and sex. The report does not provide one list of those at risk of being left behind, but does refer to a range of groups throughout the goal-by-goal analysis and in the chapter on leaving no one behind. These include children with disabilities, migrant women, women and girls with disabilities, the gypsy population, those with a higher risk of falling into poverty, non-European Union immigrants, unemployed people and people under the age of 18. The report also notes that a significant rural-urban gap exists with those in rural locations more likely to experience a lower standard of living. The report has a significant emphasis on legislation and specialised policies to leave no one behind, improve gender equality and reduce domestic inequalities.

Awareness raising and localisation

According to the report, "there has been no need to make a special effort to inform and involve [non-state] stakeholders in the 2030 Agenda, because they were already fully engaged" (p. 21). Nevertheless, the report notes that the private sector has called on the government to launch an awareness-raising campaign on the 2030 Agenda with the private sector. Going forward, the government has developed a 2030 Communication Plan and the High-Level Group created a working group on communication. The report also notes the creation of a "2030 Agenda Communication Pact" that would include plans and actions by all levels of government, companies and civil society, providing a way to mobilise media and channels of communication in a consistent manner.

The report notes that efforts to localise the 2030 Agenda are fairly advanced. A number of local governments have already mapped the SDGs against their work and incorporated them into plans and policies.

> **GOOD PRACTICE SPOTLIGHT**
> **The report includes a dedicated chapter on localisation that outlines the key initiatives of local governments to implement the 2030 Agenda. The chapter includes reference to commitments, progress made, awareness-raising and specific partnerships at the local level.**

Partnership to realise the SDGs

The report has a strong emphasis on the roles of non-state actors in SDG implementation include the private sector, academia, civil society, professional associations and trade unions. Numerous examples of non-state actor contributions are presented, including at the local level. In addition to the main report, position papers and reports prepared by non-state actors (universities, civil society, the business sector and professional associations) were included in the documents submitted to the High-level Political Forum.

Measurement and reporting

According to the report, Spain is reporting against global, regional (European Union) and national SDG targets. The country has 134 global indicators available, or nearly 55%.

The report has a strong emphasis on accountability for 2030 Agenda implementation. It highlights regular reporting to parliament and discussions therein, evaluation of the action plan, and planned reporting to the High-level Political Forum (2020–21, 2025 and 2030).

> **GOOD PRACTICE SPOTLIGHT**
> **The report provides an overview of how Spain will monitor the SDGs including through the use of global, regional and national indicators. Data will be presented through a publicly available scorecard. In addition, the country will prepare an annual report to parliament. The key institutions responsible for implementation, especially the High Commission for the 2030 Agenda, will present a report on their contributions. The action plan will also be evaluated in 2020 with the aim of identifying outcomes and lessons learned. Finally, the report presents a time table for reporting to the High-level Political Forum.**

Sri Lanka

In 2018, Sri Lanka 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 primary ministry responsible for 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development implementation is the Ministry of Sustainable Development and Wildlife. The 2030 Agenda is also being mainstreamed into institutional plans across government ministries and levels of government. The Sustainable Development Council, established in 2017, has a coordination role and includes members appointed by the president, including from provincial councils. A ministerial sub-committee also exists and will appoint an advisory board to prepare a vision for 2030 and to formulate the vision of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Office of Strategic Development Evaluation will ensure oversight for progress on implementation. A Parliamentary Select Committee for Sustainable Development was established to provide political leadership for the implementation of the SDGs.

> **Civil society validity check**
>
> According to a civil society report, the decision-making structure for 2030 Agenda implementation is unclear, there is limited political leadership and efforts are uncoordinated across government.
>
> The government established a Consultative Committee on Sustainable Development that includes representatives from government, civil society, the private sector and academia.

Stakeholder engagement

As the first step, a Stakeholder Engagement Plan was developed. The Ministry of National and Provincial Sustainable Development has established engagement platforms to convene representatives from central and local government, civil society, academia, private sector and development agencies. Stakeholders were consulted in the preparation of the report.

> **Civil society validity check**
>
> According to the civil society report prepared by the Sri Lanka Stakeholder SDG Platform, the VNR was government-led, lacking leadership and direction. Consultations, albeit imperfect, occurred as a result of advocacy from civil society.

Policies

Baseline or gap analysis

According to the report, Sri Lanka assessed policies in terms of their alignment with the SDGs, including through a rapid integrated assessment of the Public Investment Programme 2017–20 by the United Nations Development Programme. An assessment of statistics was also carried out to understand the current state of progress. An assessment of national capacities was also carried out to monitor and evaluate progress on 2030 Agenda implementation. The report includes details in terms of overall alignment between national policies and the 2030 Agenda according to the various assessments carried out by government and the United Nations Development Programme.

Incorporating the SDGs

Sri Lanka's overarching policy document is Vision 2025: A Country Enriched. This is complemented by the Public Investment Programme 2017–20, which incorporates the SDGs. A national policy and strategy for sustainable development is planned. Once approved, government institutions, including at the sub-national level, will be required to prepare sustainable development strategies.

The report refers only to the 2030 Agenda principle of leaving no one behind.

Nationalising the 2030 Agenda

The report refers to a number of national priorities as outlined in the government's policy statement, Blue-Green Budget and Public Investment Programme. The policy statement includes five priorities: employment opportunities, increasing income levels, developing rural economies, ensuring land ownership and creating a wide and strong middle class. The budget focuses on making better use of ocean

resources. The Public Investment Programme includes priorities related to human resource development, agriculture, industry, investment, trade and tourism, infrastructure, good governance, environmental management, social protection and regional development. As a next step, the government plans to establish national indicators to support the incorporation of SDG targets into national plans and policies.

⚙ Integration and policy coherence

The report provides a detailed examination of all SDGs with equal attention to economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development and the linkages between them. It does not refer to policy coherence for sustainable development, and links SDG implementation to the Paris Agreement on climate change, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

Means of implementation
🖥 Implementing the 2030 Agenda

The main challenges to 2030 Agenda implementation include financing, technological development, capacity constraints, trade and investment, policy and institutional coherence, multi-stakeholder partnerships, and measurement and accountability.

Sri Lanka plans to make use of existing budgetary processes to incorporate the SDGs into budgets. The country has also identified sources of finance for implementation, including national resources, and domestic and foreign borrowing. Sri Lanka has seen a decline in official development assistance.

✋ Leave no one behind

The elderly, internally displaced people, persons with disabilities, women and children are at risk of falling behind. The report details legal guarantees, welfare policies and programmes, social protection and rural development to leave no one behind. Information presented in the report is detailed, highlighting initiatives in health, education, social protection, nutrition, child safety and women's empowerment.

📡 Awareness raising and localisation

The report notes efforts to raise awareness of the 2030 Agenda with public officials.

Civil society validity check

Public awareness of the SDGs is low and most awareness-raising activities have happened within the capital city and among a select group of stakeholders. A key challenge for implementation is low levels of awareness among senior public officials.

With respect to localisation, efforts have been made to identify roles and responsibilities for 2030 Agenda implementation. Focal points from provincial councils also coordinate with the national government. Sri Lanka plans to mainstream the SDGs at the sub-national level. Civil society organisations note that capacity development for local authorities to contribute to 2030 Agenda implementation has not progressed quickly enough, among other challenges in the localisation process.

❇ Partnership to realise the SDGs

The report provides specific examples of initiatives by parliament, the private sector and United Nations agencies. Sri Lanka was supported by the United Nations to carry out the VNR. The country requires technical assistance and capacity development from development partners, particularly with respect to data collection.

GOOD PRACTICE SPOTLIGHT

Sri Lanka established the Select Committee of Parliament on the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to review and provide advice on 2030 Agenda implementation, and coordinate activities with the parliament and respective ministries. The committee includes 15 members of parliament, and will make recommendations on the formulation of national policies and laws; allocation of domestic and international resources; coordination among government institutions; networking at national, provincial and local levels; engagement with non-state actors; and follow-up and review. The committee also has a mandate to share expertise and experiences at regional and international levels.

Civil society organisations have noted that despite these efforts, levels of awareness on the SDGs remain low among parliamentarians.

Measurement and reporting

A report and website were launched in 2017 on the status of SDG implementation. The status of data availability is unclear from the report, however, additional disaggregated data is needed in terms of gender, disability and migrant status. The need to strengthen statistical capacities is highlighted. Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms have been established including plans to establish a web-based monitoring information system. The Auditor General's Department has initiated steps to include the SDGs in auditing processes.

Civil society validity check

According to a civil society report, data are compiled for 46 of the SDG indicators and an additional 29 indicators could be compiled by adding new modules to existing data collection. Other government institutions need to take the lead for 131 indicators. Civil society organisations have called for the establishment of a national sustainable development data and information portal (as promised by the National SDG Action Plan). They also call for the development of baselines, noting that the VNR report was prepared without an evaluation of the current implementation of the SDGs.

State of Palestine

In 2018, the State of Palestine 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 report points to the establishment of a national team that includes government, civil society and the private sector to coordinate national implementation and follow-up. The team is led by the Prime Minister's Office and has responsibility for identifying national priorities and integrating them into planning and budgeting processes. The institutional structure for implementation also includes 12 working groups with representatives from civil society groups, the United Nations, private sector, government, workers unions, academic and research organisations as well as organisations dedicated to women, youth and persons with disabilities.

Stakeholder engagement

The report does not provide information on formal mechanisms for stakeholder engagement. However, non-state actors were involved in the selection of national priorities and the VNR, both of which included consultations.

A report about civil society's contribution to 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development implementation in the State of Palestine was prepared for the 2018 Social Watch Report by Social and Economic Policies Monitor.

Policies

Baseline or gap analysis

The State of Palestine carried out a data assessment, finding that data is available for 109 Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicators.

Incorporating the SDGs

The 2030 Agenda has been incorporated into the State of Palestine's National Policy Agenda 2017–22, Putting Citizens First, according to the report. The government also plans to prepare a roadmap for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and

ministries have been mandated to include the SDGs with their efforts supported by a guidebook.

The report refers to the universal nature of the 2030 Agenda and the importance of leaving no one behind.

> **Civil society validity check**
>
> The government does not see the 2030 Agenda as a fundamental framework for planning, but rather a complementary tool. Though the SDGs have been incorporated, the efforts by the national team and the government are seen as reproducing existing policies and practices with no major changes in approach.

Nationalising the 2030 Agenda

Sustainable development priorities set out in the National Policy Agenda include independence, quality public services and enhanced efforts towards sustainable development with social justice as central to the overarching agenda. More specifically, the report refers to poverty reduction, social protection, access to justice, gender equality, a secure future for youth, inclusive and quality education including early childhood education, healthcare, safety and security, rule of law, agriculture and rural communities, environmental sustainability and protection of Palestinian identity and cultural heritage. National targets have been identified.

Integration and policy coherence

The report provides a detailed examination of all SDGs with equal attention to all three dimensions of sustainable development, though limited references to the linkages between them. The report does not refer to policy coherence for sustainable development and refers only to the Paris Agreement on climate change and the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Means of implementation

⟳ Implementing the 2030 Agenda

The inclusion of non-state actors in the governance mechanism for 2030 Agenda implementation is noted as a result of lessons learned during the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals. The key challenges to implementation presented in the report include occupation in key areas, lack of control of natural resources, high population growth, the need to strengthen institutional capacities for follow-up and implementation based on human rights and partnership (an area the State of Palestine would like to learn from others), and data availability.

The report indicates that the SDGs will be included in national budgets. In addition to domestic public resources, international aid is important for supporting implementation. The State of Palestine has seen a decline in official development assistance since 2011 and urges international partners to fulfill their obligations and commitments. The report also notes that Israel holds veto power over the State of Palestine's ability to trade in practice, and that the government hopes to join the World Trade Organization and trade without restrictions.

✋ Leave no one behind

Efforts to leave no one behind appear to be informed by existing data, and gender disaggregated data is available in the report most of the time. Persons with disabilities, especially women, people living in the West Bank and Gaza, youth, women, and ex-prisoners are identified as those at risk of being left behind. The report also points to the need to address geographical inequalities.

Efforts to leave no one behind focus predominantly on persons with disabilities. The report outlines legal and legislative efforts, policies and programmes, such as support transfers, micro-loans and employment quota systems. The report focuses on international agreements and progress on legislation to address gender inequality.

◉ Awareness raising and localisation

There is no information presented on awareness-raising activities in the report, however it is noted as needed. Localisation is understood in terms of setting priorities and integrating them into planning, policy and budgeting processes. Information on implementation at the local level is not presented.

◈ Partnership to realise the SDGs

The report makes a number of references to partnerships to support 2030 Agenda implementation but does not provide specific

examples. Moving beyond finance, the government calls on the international community to support the State of Palestine's "struggle for sovereignty and the numerous condemnations of illegal Israeli practices under international law" (p. 80).

Civil society validity check

The government does not see the 2030 Agenda as a fundamental framework for planning, but rather a complementary tool. Though the SDGs have been incorporated, the efforts by the national team and the government are seen as reproducing existing policies and practices with no major changes in approach.

The report by civil society notes that the space for civil society is shrinking and that the government is taking control of the judiciary and affiliating with the private sector.

▤ Measurement and reporting

The State of Palestine has 109 SDG indicators available, though some lack disaggregation by region, gender or age. The national statistics office is working to improve data management, particularly to make use of administrative data. The government plans to make a public database available and has established an internal task force related to the provision of SDG indicators.

The report notes that establishing a monitoring and reporting structure for 2030 Agenda implementation is a next step. The government is planning for annual reviews, with participation by non-state actors, to be presented at the National Forum on Sustainable Development.

Sudan

In 2018, Sudan presented the findings from its first voluntary national review (VNR) to the United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. Sudan submitted only key messages and no formal report. The information provided below draws from the key messages. As no report was submitted, there a significant information gaps for each of the pillars of analysis below.

Governance and institutional mechanisms

Leadership, governance and institutions

The main messages do not include detailed information on leadership, governance or institutions, though they note a commitment by the government to 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development implementation. They refer to the High-level National Mechanism and the role of the National Population Council as the secretariat but no further details are provided.

Civil society validity check

According to a civil society report, the government established a Higher Committee for Sustainable Development in 2015 chaired by the vice president and secretary general of the National Population Council. The National Population Council is the focal point and secretariat for the council. Civil society and the private sector are not included on the council.

Stakeholder engagement

The main messages do not provide information on formal processes for stakeholder engagement, though they note that non-state actors were engaged in the VNR. Africa Working Group-Sudan prepared a civil society report for the VNR. The report recommends enhancing dialogue and partnerships between the government, civil society and international partners.

Policies

Baseline or gap analysis

There is no information in the main messages on baseline or gap analysis.

Incorporating the SDGs

The VNR contributed to the preparation of a national framework to integrate the 2030 Agenda according to the main messages. Harmonisation of national plans with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is an ongoing process. The main messages refer to the principle of leaving no one behind.

Civil society validity check

According to the civil society report, policies and implementation plans have not been transformed to comply with the SDGs, including their indicators.

Nationalising the 2030 Agenda

The main messages from the VNR suggest that Sudan is in the process of preparing a national development plan and indicators framework. The VNR is referred to as a tool for selecting national priorities.

Civil society validity check

According to the civil society report, Sudan's main SDG objectives are prosperity and economic development, social development, peace and security, and conservation of the environment.

Integration and policy coherence

The main messages do not provide an examination of the SDGs and focus only on social and economic dimensions of sustainable development. There is no mention of relevant international frameworks and agreements that support 2030 Agenda implementation.

Means of implementation

⟳ Implementing the 2030 Agenda

The main messages note a need to develop technical capacity and knowledge on the 2030 Agenda for all stakeholders including government, civil society and the private sector. They also highlight that the continued unwillingness to admit Sudan to the group of Heavily Indebted Poor Countries is unjustifiable.

Civil society validity check

The civil society report highlights a wide range of challenges for 2030 Agenda implementation. These include a lack of financial resources; limited data availability and capacity to monitor; poor technical capacity, especially at the states' level; lack of baselines; outdated laws and legislation; lack of integration of plans in line with the national strategy; poor coordination within and across sectors (government, civil society, the private sector and development partners); limited trust between government and civil society; overlapping and conflicting mandates across government; and misunderstandings of the SDGs.

Civil society validity check

According to the civil society report, the Central Bureau of Statistics established a special unit to prepare indicators to monitor progress on the SDGs. A special questionnaire was developed for use in the Multi-Indicator Cluster Survey and report planned for 2019.

✋ Leave no one behind

The main messages provide no information on efforts to leave no one behind.

⊙ Awareness raising and localisation

The VNR served as a means to raise awareness of the 2030 Agenda. The main messages do not comment on the state of localisation.

⤸ Partnership to realise the SDGs

The main messages to not provide information on partnerships to implement the 2030 Agenda. The civil society report noted efforts by civil society networks, the private sector and academia.

📋 Measurement and reporting

The main messages highlight the need to invest in information and data on the SDGs, including working with academic and research institutions. There is no information on national-level reporting.

Switzerland

In 2018, Switzerland submitted its second voluntary national review (VNR) report to the United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. Switzerland presented its first report in 2016.

Governance and institutional mechanisms

Leadership, governance and institutions

The report points to the Forum Nachhaltige Entwicklung ("Sustainable Development Forum") as the main mechanisms for engagement between different levels of government in Switzerland. A 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Advisory Group also exists that includes representation by civil society, the private sector and academia.

Civil society validity check

Civil society organisations argue that a high-level, central institutional unit should be established, spanning government departments and economic sectors. Such a unit could ensure coherence and monitor 2030 Agenda implementation. In addition to creating a central contact point at the federal level, there is also a need to build capacity at the local level for 2030 Agenda implementation and coordination.

Stakeholder engagement

According to the report, the 2020 Dialogue for Sustainable Development Platform offers an opportunity for engagement by civil society. The government plans to strengthen engagement and coordination with non-state actors going forward. While non-state actors participated in the VNR, however, no information is available on their engagement in the selection of national priorities for 2030 Agenda implementation. The civil society report prepared by Platform 2030 Agenda, has called for new forms and mechanisms for participation.

Policies

Baseline or gap analysis

An assessment was carried out to establish baselines for 2030 Agenda implementation. Switzerland examined current progress, existing measures and challenges according the report.

Incorporating the SDGs

Switzerland's Sustainable Development Strategy (2017–19) and its Dispatch on Switzerland's International Cooperation are based on the 2030 Agenda.

Civil society validity check

There is a need for governments at all levels in Switzerland to align political strategies with the 2030 Agenda, including by filling legislative gaps.

The report refers to planetary boundaries, inter-generational responsibility and leaving no one behind.

Nationalising the 2030 Agenda

National priorities were selected for 2030 Agenda implementation but the report does not outline what they are. Existing national targets and indicators on sustainable development are being used and expanded to monitor the 2030 Agenda. Switzerland is making use of 85 indicators.

Integration and policy coherence

The report provides a summary level examination of all Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with equal attention to all dimensions of sustainable development though limited references to the linkages between them. Switzerland ensures policy coherence through procedures that ensure high quality legislation, consultation with key stakeholder groups, impact assessments and joint reporting. The VNR report refers to the Paris Agreement on climate change, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.

Means of implementation

Implementing the 2030 Agenda

The report does not refer to best practices, lessons learned, challenges in implementation, learning from peers or financing domestic implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Switzerland's

contributions through foreign assistance and support for a universal, rule-based, multilateral trading system are noted. The report also highlights support for partner countries to participate in and benefit from international trade. With respect to systemic issues, Switzerland is working to combat money laundering, exchange information in tax matters and reinforce financial stability in the banking sector.

Leave no one behind

The report points primarily to persons with disabilities as at risk of being left behind. Efforts appear to be informed by existing data, though very little data is actually presented in the report. Switzerland will work to leave no one behind through existing policies (that are not described in detail in the report). Gender equality is a priority for Switzerland, enshrined in and supported by legislation, programmes and initiatives.

Civil society validity check

The civil society report points to a much wider range of people at risk of being left behind, including people affected by poverty, women, migrants, children and young adults, people with disabilities, the elderly, people in unstable employment situations and other marginalised social groups. The civil society report provides a comprehensive critique of Switzerland's efforts on the leave no one behind agenda, noting that more work is needed to combat inequality at national and international levels, support gender equality and improve the lives of persons with disabilities.

Awareness raising and localisation

The report does not refer to awareness-raising activities. At the local level, many governments have established their own sustainable development strategies. The federal government plans to intensify engagement with them going forward.

Civil society validity check

There is a need for the federal government take greater steps to raise awareness of the 2030 Agenda, including through education initiatives.

Partnership to realise the SDGs

The report suggests that non-state actors are participating in 2030 Agenda implementation, however, it does not provide any examples.

Measurement and reporting

Information is provided on progress (in terms of the direction of trends) for Switzerland's chosen SDG indicators. The review of the country's 85 indicators showed that 39 are moving in the right direction, 12 have had no change and 14 show a negative trend. An assessment was not possible for an additional 20 indicators. The status of data availability for the global SDG indicators is not clear from the report.

GOOD PRACTICE SPOTLIGHT
Presenting progress on national targets in reports.

The report does not refer to national reporting, but notes that Switzerland will report on implementation every four years.

Togo

In 2018, Togo submitted its third 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 report highlights three mechanisms for 2030 Agenda implementation. The National Development Council provides support for strategic orientations and monitors results. The Strategic Secretariat supports the council and is responsible for coordination of monitoring implementation. The Operational Secretariat facilitates an integrated monitoring mechanism on a daily basis. The report notes that civil society and the private sector are an integral part of implementation mechanisms, however, it does not stipulate how they are involved.

Stakeholder engagement

The report refers to consultation processes with non-state actors on national priorities and the VNR. A civil society report was prepared by "Groupe de Travail des OSC sur les ODD."

Civil society validity check

According to the civil society report prepared by the Working Group of Civil Society Organizations for the SDGs (Groupe de Travail des OSC sur les ODD - GTOSC-ODD), there has been an improvement in the collaboration between the government and civil society since 2017. Civil society was involved in all phases of preparation of the 2018 VNR, including the launch phase of the process, information gathering and validation of the report. Civil society organisations were also involved in the drafting phase of the 2018 VNR through a drafting retreat in May 2018.

Policies

Baseline or gap analysis

The report does not refer to a baseline or gap assessment per se. Rather, it notes that efforts to prioritise the SDGs included an assessment to prioritise SDG targets. This led to the prioritisation of 60 targets.

Incorporating the SDGs

The report highlights Togo's commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and ownership over the goals through its National Development Plan for the 2018–22 period. The plan integrates the goals based on their associated targets, 60 of which have been prioritised by the country as noted above. The report makes no reference to any of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development principles.

Nationalising the 2030 Agenda

The National Development Plan includes five priorities: improve the well-being of the people and enable them to fulfil their potential; improve the productivity and competitiveness of growth sectors; strengthen infrastructure that supports growth; ensure sustainable management of the territory, the environment and living conditions; and strengthen governance and consolidate peace. In addition to these, three "strategic axes" have been set out including the establishment of a logistics hub of excellence and a world-class business centre in the sub-region; development of poles for agricultural processing, manufacturers and extractive industries; and consolidation of social development and strengthened inclusion mechanisms.

Integration and policy coherence

The report provides a summary examination of the SDGs under the 2018 High-level Political Form theme "Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies," specifically SDG 6 on clean water and sanitation, SDG 7 on affordable and clean energy, SDG 11 on sustainable cities and communities, SDG 12 on responsible consumption and production, SDG 15 on life on land and SDG 17 on partnerships for the goals. It gives attention to economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development, however, linkages to the environment, in particular, are limited in the goal-by-goal analysis, particularly given the goals assessed. For example, there is no reference to climate change in the discussion on SDG 7 on affordable and clean energy. The report does not refer to policy coherence for sustainable development or international agreements that relate to and support implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Means of implementation
Implementing the 2030 Agenda

Similar to its 2017 report, Togo's 2018 report highlights the need for Togo to optimise its resource and partner mobilisation strategies for the realisation of its development objectives. The government has embarked on the implementation of reforms geared at mobilising both domestic and external resources for economic emergence. The report highlights the creation of the Togolese Revenue Authority that has increased tax revenues and points to the approval of a US $35 million support programme from the Millennium Challenge Corporation. Challenges to implementation include "land tenure rights, decentralisation, digitisation of the economy, setting a national statistical system, strengthening of human resource capacities and financing of the economy" (p. 12).

Leave no one behind

The report does not include a chapter on leaving no one behind. The principle is not mentioned, and the goal-by-goal analysis does not place an emphasis on vulnerable populations. The report does not articulate the populations that are being left behind. The 2017 report identified young people, women, people with disabilities, people living with HIV, people living in rural areas, farmers and the elderly as at risk of being left behind.

Awareness raising and localisation

The 2018 report does not refer to awareness-raising activities. However, the 2017 version detailed several awareness and outreach activities dedicated to the SDGs to ensure a shared vision at all levels.

The report does not identify specific measures related to localising the 2030 Agenda.

Partnership to realise the SDGs

The report points to a small number of specific partnerships with the private sector and civil society that support 2030 Agenda implementation. The role of the private sector in supporting implementation is stressed. Civil society organisations have formed a working group on the SDGs and are working towards the formulation of a charter to establish a Civil Society Organisation Forum on Sustainable Development. The report also has a strong emphasis on the role of development partners, particularly in terms of providing financial support.

Measurement and reporting

Data availability for SDG monitoring is not mentioned in the report. Nevertheless, the report notes that setting up the national statistical system is a challenge for SDG implementation. In 2017, the report noted that Togo aimed to strengthen statistical production by operationalising the National Institute of Statistics, Economic and Demographic Studies. Progress in this area is not presented.

According to the 2017 report, a unit was established at the Presidency of the Republic to monitor sustainable development and international agreements. The 2018 report refers only to the "special monitoring and enforcement units under the auspices of the Presidency of the Republic" (p. 18). It also notes the roles of the National Development Council and its associated structures in monitoring. The report does not include information on the content and timing of reports.

United Arab Emirates

In 2018, the United Arab Emirates 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 United Arab Emirates established a National Committee on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The committee is chaired by the Minister of State for International Cooperation and Chairwomen of the Federal Competitiveness and Statistics Authority and includes 12 other federal government institutions. The Federal Competitiveness and Statistics Authority serves as the secretariat. The committee is responsible for policy alignment, implementation, monitoring, reporting on progress and stakeholder engagement. Other stakeholders are invited to observe the committee where relevant on an ad hoc basis.

Stakeholder engagement

While there is no formal mechanism for stakeholder engagement articulated in the report, the National Committee on SDGs has developed an engagement strategy. The committee's communication strategy focuses on raising awareness, engagement and maintaining engagement. The national committee also hosts an annual event to bring together non-state actors for dialogue and coordination on implementation. Non-state actors were engaged in the selection of national priorities and the VNR.

Policies

Baseline or gap analysis

The United Arab Emirates carried out an assessment of policies vis-à-vis the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by mapping SDG targets against federal and local development plans. This assessment was part of the country's process of selecting national priorities.

Incorporating the SDGs

The 2030 Agenda has been incorporated into the work of government institutions through the country's development frameworks Vision 2021 and Vision 2071. A strategy has been prepared to progress on the SDGs and the country's Vision 2021 concurrently. The SDGs are also central to the government's aid policy.

The report refers to 2030 Agenda principles of leaving no one behind and inter-generational responsibility.

Nationalising the 2030 Agenda

The United Arab Emirates's national priorities include a cohesive society and preserved identity, safety and a fair judiciary, a competitive knowledge economy driven by innovation, education, healthcare, environmental sustainability and infrastructure. The report also notes that happiness and well-being are priorities. The national priorities are supported by 52 key performance indicators and national targets are presented for some of the goals examined.

Integration and policy coherence

The report provides a detailed examination of all SDGs, though with a more limited focus on environmental dimensions of sustainable development. Policy coherence is ensured through mechanisms that create alignment between national and sub-national policies.

The report refers to the Paris Agreement on climate change, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.

Means of implementation

Implementing the 2030 Agenda

The United Arab Emirates highlights its governance-excellence model as an example of best practice. The model focusses on innovation in the public sector, achievement of key objectives, services, smart government and performance management, inter alia. The United Arab Emirates is investing in technology and capacity-development at the national level. There is a strong focus on the role of the private sector with respect to technology, as well as in terms of promoting trade and investment in partner countries. The United Arab Emirates was the largest donor in terms of official development assistance to gross national income in 2016 reaching 1.12%, surpassing the United Nations target of 0.7%.

Leave no one behind

The elderly, orphans, women including widows, unemployed people, persons with disabilities, families of imprisoned people and those in ill health are at risk of being left behind in the United Arab Emirates. Efforts to leave no one behind are informed by existing data and include the provision of a range of social welfare programmes. The report notes that there is an absence of poverty in the country. Programmes target specific groups that have been identified as vulnerable and categories of people who may benefit from such programmes are reviewed regularly. The report highlights policies and initiatives to benefit persons with disabilities and women.

Awareness raising and localisation

As noted, the National Committee on SDGs has prepared a national engagement strategy. The report notes that widespread efforts have been launched to raise awareness of the 2030 Agenda.

Each Emirate has its own sustainable development plan, however, localisation occurs through the use of key performance indicators at the local level and joint efforts by the national and local governments to deliver public services. The report also includes examples of initiatives at the local level that contribute to the SDGs.

Partnership to realise the SDGs

The government works with civil society organisations such as the Emirates Red Crescent to deliver social services and through international cooperation. The United Nations Global Compact Network United Arab Emirates has raised awareness of the SDGs, is engaging youth in academic institutions and is facilitating multi-stakeholder initiatives that bring together a range of businesses to support sustainable development outcomes. Local youth councils have been providing their inputs into SDG priorities for their communities and carrying out projects.

Measurement and reporting

The report does not provide information on the status of data availability. However, it does note that the United Arab Emirates will improve capacities and available data to inform decision-making on the SDGs. A plan will be developed for SDG monitoring and the government is exploring public-private partnerships.

In terms of reporting, the federal government uses a government performance monitor to manage strategic plans and report on key performance indicators. Progress is audited by the Prime Minister's Office. National key performance indicators are periodically uploaded to a dashboard system on a regular basis.

Uruguay

In 2018, Uruguay submitted its second voluntary national review (VNR) report to the United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. Its previous presentation took place in 2017.

Governance and institutional mechanisms

Leadership, governance and institutions

An already existing Office of Planning and Budget of the Presidency of the Republic was designated as the national Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) institution responsible for leading implementation in Uruguay. The position of the SDGs coordinator was created as part of its structure, but the main political body responsible for implementing and following-up on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is the president. There is no direct participation of non-governmental actors in the Office of Planning and Budget.

Stakeholder engagement

The main tool to promote dialogue with stakeholders has been the "Social Dialogue: Uruguay to the future," discussed in detail at the 2017 report. There are also several thematic areas linked to the SDGs in which the report calls for institutional stakeholder participation, such as the Regional Irrigation Advisory Boards, participatory budgets, the Uruguay Integra Programme and the Rural Development Dialogues.

The social dialogue provided inputs to the VNR. The Office of Management and Evaluation within the Office of Planning and Budget prepared an initial SDGs stakeholder-mapping exercise and meetings were held between the identified actors, the Uruguayan government and United Nations system agencies based in the country.

Policies

Baseline or gap analysis

The VNR is underlined as a positive experience for the country, allowing it to establish baselines for several indicators. However, the report does not describe any baselines definition or gaps identification process carried out by Uruguay and the report's statistical annex does not show information related to existing baselines.

Incorporating the SDGs

Uruguay has aligned its national policies with the 2030 Agenda. The leave no one behind principle is considered cross-cutting. The human rights-based approach, explicitly linked with the human-centred perspective of sustainable development, is also introduced as a core element to be taken into account while implementing the SDGs at the national level.

Nationalising the 2030 Agenda

National priorities are not articulated in the report. However, when analysing some goals, references are made to national targets arising from general policies adopted by Uruguay, such as the National Strategy for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological Diversity 2016–20, linked to SDG 15 on life on land.

Integration and policy coherence

The report only analyses the SDGs covered by the High-level Political Forum theme examined, namely SDG 6 on clean water and sanitation; SDG 7 on affordable and clean energy; SDG 11 on sustainable cities and communities; SDG 12 on responsible consumption and production; and SDG 15 on life on land. Each goal receives a detailed examination and equal attention is given to economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development while considering interlinkages between goals and targets. However, no reference to policy coherence for sustainable development is made.

Climate change and the Paris Agreement on climate change, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and many other international frameworks are referred to in the report.

Means of implementation

Implementing the 2030 Agenda

No best practices or lessons learned are identified by Uruguay. On the contrary, many challenges in implementing the 2030 Agenda are highlighted such as improving data availability, increasing the

availability of funds to support activities and actions aimed to SDGs implementation, improving sub-national management, and mainstreaming the environmental dimension across social-policies planning.

There are references to technology, capacity development, international public finance and systemic issues as means of implementation. Regarding systemic issues, the report notes that since January 1, 2018, Uruguay is not part of the list of official development assistance-eligible countries, affecting its chances to comply with the commitments set out as part of the 2030 Agenda. Nevertheless, domestic and international public financing are underlined as the major sources of funding for national implementation. Concerning domestic public finance, a budget transparency portal has been created, exhibiting links between the national budget and SDGs implementation and follow-up plans and programmes.

Leave no one behind

Similar to the 2017 report, the leave no one behind principle is barely considered in the 2018 Uruguay report. Vulnerable groups are not identified. However, some references are made to supporting vulnerable groups. The report states that the costs of liquefied petroleum gas are subsidised by the government to keep prices lower due to the importance of this energy for the population. However, in the future, only vulnerable sectors will benefit from this subsidy. It is not clear from the report when or how this will happen.

Awareness raising and localisation

In each national region and municipality, public exhibitions about the SDGs were organised, as well as workshops with the local government cabinets and consultative dialogues with civil society aimed at explaining and aligning national and local policies with the SDGs. Regarding dissemination, an open-access portal has been created to show SDG-related initiatives carried out by civil society, public bodies and the business sector.

The report also refers to a process called "SDGs localisation in Uruguay" with the goal of raising awareness and disseminating activities linked to the 2030 Agenda, identifying implementation priorities and designing roadmaps for the SDGs localisation that considers particular subnational contexts in the 2030 Agenda implementation.

Partnership to realise the SDGs

There are several references to civil society involvement in governmental institutions in charge of designing and planning public policies. Nevertheless, civil society organisations' 2030 Agenda

implementation activities are not mentioned explicitly in the report, and neither are activities regarding the private sector.

Academia is identified as a source of accurate and rigorous information related to SDGs implementation progress. Parliamentary support through the national budget and adoption of laws is expressly mentioned as well.

Remarks on the financial and technical support provided by international cooperation counterparts, the Inter-American Development Bank and the United Nations System in Uruguay are included with respect to programmes aimed to achieve each goal. In the report, the Uruguayan government expresses its gratitude for the support provided by the United Nations system, especially United Nations Development Programme, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and United Nations Environment Programme to national efforts to carry out the VNR.

Measurement and reporting

A working group on SDGs indicators was created as part of the national statistical system of Uruguay. As a result of its work, the country produces 123 of the global indicators in a conceptually clear way, through established methodologies and available standards, in a regular basis and using data provided by country's official sources (Tier 1). Another group of 65 indicators have conceptually clear indicators, an established methodology and available standards, but rely on data not regularly produced, generated by an international organisation based on unofficial sources or based in existing but insufficient data (Tier 2). Finally, the remaining 55 global indicators lack established methodology or standards or are based on unofficial data that have not been validated by the country's statistical authorities (Tier 3). The report includes information on the status of data availability for each goal but does not provide information on disaggregated data.

Viet Nam

In 2018, Viet Nam 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

Viet Nam is making use of its existing National Council for Sustainable Development and Competitiveness Improvement to provide advice to the prime minister on sustainable development. The lead government institution for 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development implementation is the Ministry of Planning and Investment with planning-finance departments in other government departments and provincial departments of planning and investment serving as focal points. How non-state actors are included in governance and institutional mechanisms for 2030 Agenda implementation is unclear from the report.

Stakeholder engagement

The report refers to meetings and conferences that are organised annually to engage stakeholders, including the National Conference on Sustainable Development, Business Forum on Sustainable Development and Viet Nam Development Partnership Forum. Non-state actors were engaged in the VNR and civil society organisations prepared an input into the process.

> **Civil society validity check**
>
> Civil society organisations recommend that the government take further steps to engage civil society and representatives of marginalised groups.

Policies

Baseline or gap analysis

With support from the United Nations Statistics Division, Viet Nam carried out a review of data for all of the global Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicators.

Incorporating the SDGs

The SDGs have been incorporated into a national action plan to implement the 2030 Agenda. According to the report, sustainable development principles are also mainstreamed in the 2011–20 Social and Economic Development Strategy and the 2016–20 Social and Economic Development Plan. The government plans to fully integrate the SDGs into its plans going forward. The report refers only to the 2030 Agenda principle of leaving no one behind.

Nationalising the 2030 Agenda

The report notes that national priorities were selected but does not articulate what they are. Viet Nam has selected 115 national targets based on the country' priorities and experiences with the Millennium Development Goals.

Integration and policy coherence

The report provides a detailed examination of all SDGs with equal attention to all dimensions of sustainable development and references to linkages between them. It does not refer to policy coherence for sustainable development and refers only to the Paris Agreement on climate change and the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Means of implementation

Implementing the 2030 Agenda

Viet Nam reported on best practices, lessons learned, challenges and where the country would like to learn from others. A socio-economic development programme was highlighted as best practice. Key lessons to accelerate implementation include strong government commitment, stakeholder involvement in implementation including the combined use of bottom-up and top-down approaches, and combining domestic potential with international co-operation. Challenges for 2030 Agenda implementation include climate change and natural disasters, global economic downturns, financial demands in light of limited national resources, coordination across government given the inter-sectoral nature of the SDGs and lack of data. Viet Nam would like to learn from countries that are more advanced in terms of science and technology.

The SDGs have been incorporated into budgets. They have been costed and sources of finance have been identified.

> **GOOD PRACTICE SPOTLIGHT**
> **Viet Nam's report includes an estimate for funding the country's Medium-term Public Investment Plan (2016–20) that supports 2030 Agenda implementation. The plan totals VND 2,000,000 billion. The government envisions that the plan will be financed by national public finance and foreign sources of finance.**

Leave no one behind

Viet Nam requires additional data to leave no one behind. Those at risk of being left behind include the poor, persons with disabilities, women, children (including orphans, abandoned children and children without nurturing care), ethnic minorities, elderly, people with HIV/AIDS from poor households and single-parent households.

The report notes a number of initiatives to leave no one behind, including specific policies that set targets to improve the lives of specific groups, social security programmes and access to free services for vulnerable groups such as education. Legal mechanisms that benefit specific groups are also mentioned. Viet Nam saw a decrease in the expenditure-based poverty rate for 40% of the population with the lowest income. The poverty rate reduced by nearly 7% annually over 1993–2014 for this population.

Awareness raising and localisation

The VNR helped raise awareness of the 2030 Agenda. In addition, the government works to raise awareness on sustainable development through regular planning processes. Nevertheless, the report notes that there is a need to further raise awareness, particularly for local communities and young people. The report does not present information on localisation.

Partnership to realise the SDGs

Viet Nam's National Action Plan includes provisions on the tasks and responsibilities of stakeholders at national and local levels. The national assembly has been promoting the 2030 Agenda through the International Parliamentary Union. The report notes that civil society organisations are carrying out various activities to support 2030 Agenda implementation, though it provides limited concrete examples. The Viet Nam Business Council for Sustainable Development is encouraging engagement within the business community to share and encourage good practices on sustainable development. With respect to development partners, Viet Nam is looking for support in terms of human and technical resources, finance, strengthened co-operation and knowledge exchange. A key area where support is needed is on sustainable production and consumption models.

Measurement and reporting

Based on the country's assessment of available data, Viet Nam can report on 60% of the global SDG indicators, primarily in education, health and poverty. The country is in the process of establishing a roadmap and indicator system to support monitoring and evaluation. A statistical working group exists with the mandate to oversee monitoring and evaluation. Investments are being made in institutional capacities and Viet Nam is working to mobilise financial and technical resources for regular data collection on the SDGs. The report also notes efforts to establish a way for the government to make use of data produced by non-state actors.

National reporting on 2030 Agenda implementation will occur with the oversight of the national assembly. The Ministry of Planning and Investment will prepare annual reports for this purpose. Annual reports will be made available for review by a wide range of stakeholders.