
Capacity Development for 2030 Agenda Implementation: Needs and Gaps from the VNRs

Workshop Report

Background

The workshop titled 'A capacity development workshop: Accelerating national implementation of the 2030 Agenda' was organized by United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA). The workshop was held at United Nations Headquarters from 9-10 April, 2019. The workshop targeted government officials engaged in national implementation of the Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and included United Nations (UN) representatives from Country Teams, Regional Commissions, and development partners. The purpose of the workshop was to offer peer-learning support to countries to address issues faced in the implementation of the SDGs.

This report summarises the discussions and conclusions of the sessions of the workshop which had a diverse range of themes and topics relevant to SDG implementation. The first day consisted of four sessions and the second day involved group discussions followed by a feedback session from the groups and a final panel discussion. The workshop agenda is detailed in

Appendix I – Agenda

Day 1

The workshop began with opening remarks from Mr. Alexander Trepelkov, Officer-in-Charge, Division for Sustainable Development Goals (DSDG), DESA and Dr. Jong Soo Yoon, Head of the United Nations Office of Sustainable Development (UNOSD).

- Mr Trepelkov provided the background context to the work of the DSDG which serves as a secretariat for the SDGs implementation. He emphasized the importance of the Voluntary National Review (VNR) process which provides a boost for country led implementation of the Agenda 2030 and at the same time recognized the VNRs as a source of valuable information with respect to the implementation gaps that countries face. Mr. Trepelkov concluded his remarks by emphasizing the purpose of the workshop which is to enable peer learning and invited participants to discuss challenges, lessons and solutions in a free and open manner.
- Dr. Jong Soo Yoon, in his remarks further underlined the importance of the VNR process and its importance for implementation of the SDGs agenda. He stated that the key characteristics of the VNR – voluntary, participatory, inclusive and evidence based, are now being widely recognized. He noted the need for transformative action to achieve the SDGs while recognizing the challenges countries face such as the need for getting buy in of public, inclusion of diverse voices, securing budget, breaking silos and building stakeholder coherence, both horizontal and vertical. He reiterated the purpose of the workshop and stated that he hoped for participants to take away action-oriented solutions to address the challenges in implementation of the SDGs agenda in their respective countries.

Session - Accelerating implementation – priority capacity development needs

The first session focused on the capacity challenges facing countries to implement the SDGs and steps taken to address them. The session was chaired by Dr. Oktorialdi, Assistant Minister for Equity and Regional Planning, Ministry of National Development Planning, Indonesia. The session consisted of three speakers.

The first speaker was Mr. Friedrich Soltau, Senior Sustainable Development Officer from the DSDG, DESA. He briefly presented the findings of an assessment conducted by a consultant on the capacity development needs and gaps reported in the VNRs and outlined the main purpose of the workshop.

- Mr. Soltau highlighted that according to the assessment, the top three capacity challenges facing countries as per the VNRs were (i) monitoring and reporting relating mostly to data availability and statistical systems, (ii) institutional capacity particularly the need to address horizontal coordination and (iii) access to financing. It was emphasized that the findings from the review of the VNRs provide a good evidence base of the capacity challenges facing countries and laid the ground work for the discussions of the workshop.
- Mr. Soltau explained that the purpose of the workshop was to understand how countries are tackling the capacity challenges and to learn from each other. This includes follow up steps taken from the VNR, any initiatives to institutionalize the VNR process and its outcomes such as the development of national reporting mechanisms, data gathering processes and formalization of multi-stakeholder engagements initiated through the VNR process. Other such initiatives include building in accountability mechanisms through the involvement of actors beyond the executive level such as the parliament or the national supreme audit institutions. He emphasized that the workshop has been designed for an open discussion and that it will be carried out in a less formal manner.

The second speaker was Mr. Ibra Sounkarou Ndiaye, Senegal. Key points outlined in his presentation are:

- **Overall highlights:** Delay in progress on one SDG can have implications for achievement of other goals. For example, a delay in education can impact employment (Goal 8) and accentuate inequalities (Goal 10). Implementation challenges vary from country to country and from rural to urban areas.
- **Capacity challenges:**
 - Capacity issues identified in the VNRs by countries are related to planning, coordination policy and legislation, at different levels – national, regional and local and the integration of SDGs to sectoral and local level.
 - Financing and budgeting
 - Monitoring and evaluation including addressing data reliability, data disaggregation, and dissemination of qualitative and quantitative information.
 - Low involvement of stakeholders such as private sector particularly those related to technology are a challenge.
- **Steps taken in Senegal**
 - Expanding Universal Health Coverage (UHC) by, extending healthcare access to remote areas.
 - Efforts in planning helped to increase the prioritization of SDGs in the Plan Emergent Senegal' (PSE) – the policy framework to achieve sustainable development, from 77 percent to 97 percent.
 - Initiative is ongoing to localize goals.
 - Creating a platform for monitoring of SDGs.
 - Annual conference on SDGs for all stakeholders are held to address gaps, challenges and data issues.
 - National priorities identified relate to strengthening education for development, promoting gender equality and sustainable lifestyle
 - Senegal plans to increase investments in key areas such as sanitation and education.

The third speaker was Ms. Regina Gallego from Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Key points outlined in is her presentation are:

- **Overall highlights:** The speaker focused on capacities to implement effective multi-sector partnerships and outlined findings from monitoring rounds conducted on aid effectiveness using reporting submitted by countries. A point was also made on Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) and how it is increasingly becoming less relevant/significant for developing countries.
- **Key challenges:**
 - Most challenges for countries are centered on planning and monitoring. This includes translating planning and monitoring processes to the local level, failure to effectively link plans to budgets and challenges in linking data to policy making. Countries are often not able to collect data at the right level of disaggregation to tailor policies to specific groups.
 - Implementing development activities and SDGs in an integrated manner has been difficult as practice has been to design and deliver policies in a sector-based manner. Similarly, governance systems are designed for sector-based operation and achieving the necessary coordination, both horizontal and vertical, to implement plans in an integrated way, proves to be challenging.
 - Other challenges relevant to ODA management include the changing aid landscape, the reducing relevance of aid as countries get access to difference forms of international and domestic assistance required to deliver development. As a result of these trends, aid coordination and coordination of the development/SDG agenda, both on the international and national front has become complex and less clear. This affects the level of understanding of the SDGs amongst those who coordinate development at the national level and in turn their motivation to convene and engage stakeholders.

- With respect to civil society engagement, the findings of OECD monitoring of aid management by countries show that while civil society extensively participates in planning, feedback from civil society shows that real opportunities for civil society to contribute to development, remains limited. Similarly, engagement of private sector proves difficult as governments are not able to ‘speak the language’ of the private sector, find opportunities of mutual interest that makes business sense for the private sector and meets public interests such as reaching the vulnerable (win-win scenarios).
- **Good practice examples:** Afghanistan was mentioned as a good practice example where effective multi-stakeholder coordination was achieved through the aid management unit that was established after the 2011 Busan Partnership Agreement, which coordinates development assistance and delivery between the presidency, ministries, academia, private sector and civil society. This platform served as the basis for stakeholder dialogue for the compilation of the Afghanistan 2017 VNR and the SDGs localization and mainstreaming process in the country. The speaker mentioned that other good examples were available online on the OECD website including studies relevant to experiences of private sector engagement and specific SDG focused studies on education, sanitation and energy which outlines the complexities of monitoring global targets at the national level.

Key points from the Q&A

- Representative from Indonesia shared that Indonesia is currently in the process of aligning national indicators with global indicators as currently 85 national indicators match with the global indicators. The national planning agency is working with the National Statistical Office (NSO) to modify data collection to meet the needs of the SDG monitoring system. As part of this effort, the NSO is trying to collect disaggregated data applying the small area method. To address financing gap, the Ministry of Finance initiated the ‘One Indonesia’ platform which aims to find collaborators for infrastructure development. Building on this idea, the Ministry of Planning is in the process of designing the ‘SDG financing hub’ which will act as a matchmaker between those facing financing gaps and sources of finance. This effort aims to harmonise sources of finance more effectively as currently this is very scattered particularly private sector financing.
- Representative from Colombia highlighted that data gathering is the biggest challenge and currently the government is formulating a policy paper on monitoring. Another gap mentioned was the lack of capacity of international agencies supporting in-country work not being familiar with work that is ongoing at the global level on data issues such as the new methodologies being developed to address measurement.
- Representative from Jamaica shared the country’s experience of adopting a national development plan that goes up to 2030 with implementation plans being developed every three years. The plan has national outcome indicators which somewhat differs from the sectoral indicators of the SDG framework. To address the data gaps and monitoring capacities, the NSO, the Planning Institute of Jamaica and the Secretariat of the Vision 2030 are currently working on having a coordinated national statistical system which aims to work with government departments and agencies’ capacity on data gathering.
- Representative from Cape Verde highlighted that the main challenge for the country is its SIDS characteristics including the vulnerabilities the country faces, the challenge of unemployment and managing the implications of graduating to a middle income country such as the decline in ODA and concessional lending.
- Representative from Kenya highlighted that Kenya has also adopted a Vision 2030 plan. The main challenge for the country is the institutional issues associated with its new constitution which resulted in the creation of independent governance bodies (counties) who’s capacity to implement SDGs remain limited as leadership keeps changing with electoral cycles. To address statistical challenges, the country will be coming up with legislation on Monitoring and Evaluation

(M&E). Other challenges include governance issues including corruption which affects effective resource allocation particularly in the face of growing national debt.

- Representative from Ecuador highlighted two main challenges facing the country. The first is to collect information at the local level which is still voluntary whereas at the national level, this was made mandatory through a Presidential Decree on the implementation of Agenda 2030 at the executive level. The representative was also interested in methodologies that can help collect information from private sector for the VNR.
- Representative from Bangladesh highlighted that their national development framework includes targets and indicators that are set up to 2030 which is further supported by five-year planning cycles. A key challenge for the country is to address sustainability and growth tradeoffs particularly in sectors such as agriculture and industrialization.
- Representative from Bahrain stated that unavailability of qualified statisticians is a challenge. Similarly, the country has data for 40 percent of Tier 1 and 2 indicators which comes mostly from Census survey and administrative records as they do not undertake surveys much. The government is working with the UN system to find the optimal method to address these gaps.
- Representative from Colombia shared efforts to collect data from the private sector for some of the indicators relevant to SDG 6, 7, 11, 15 and 17. Although data was gathered from only seven companies in the pilot initiative through a data gathering sheet shared by the government, efforts are being made to expand the initiative to 200 companies this year. Building on this, the government has designed the SDG Corporate Tracker which will compile the data from the companies. To incentivize companies to provide data, the government reached out directly to CEOs of companies and is encouraging a formal disclosure of information from the CEO while the government guarantees confidentiality and not disclosing any company specific information to the public.

Session - Nationalizing" the Agenda

This session aimed to provide countries the opportunity to share their experience of integrating the SDGs into national development plans and policy frameworks and linking the SDG relevant priorities to budgets and financing frameworks. The session was chaired by Ms. Verena Klingler-Denger, Counsellor, Permanent Mission of Germany to the United Nations

The first presenter was Mr. Hak-Kyun Maeng, Director of Sustainable Development Strategy Division, Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Korea. Korea's experience was summarised as follows:

- Korea had a national sustainability framework based on a Sustainability Act. With the introduction of Agenda 2030, efforts are now being made to modify the global SDG indicators to the Korean context. 84 of the global indicators matched Korea's national indicators.
- This target setting process was carried out by a three-tier platform which included (i) an inter-ministerial government body, (ii) working groups with experts from different sectors, academia, think tanks and civil society and (iii) stakeholder groups specific to women, disability etc. The process was mainly driven by the second group as the first group consisting of government representatives tended to be conservative in their target setting and the third group tended to be over ambitious while the second group was well positioned to take opinions from all the groups and put forward a more balanced proposal. The second group of 192 experts therefore led the drafting of the Korean SDGs referred to as the K-SDGs.
- Some of the global indicators not relevant to Korea were dropped while priorities identified for Korea included low birth rate, population ageing, plastics and inter-Korea conflict. For each of these areas 2030 targets were set.
- Social dialogues on the K-SDGs are continuing as one year was not enough to fully consult on and promote the priorities.
- Efforts are now being made to update the statistical system with the modified indicators.

- Korea aims to do two-year progress checks on the indicators and provide feedback to the ministry, civil society and public on its performance.
- Korea is planning to take the SDGs to the local government level. It will focus on 'doing it right' with rigour than doing it fast.

Summary of points from Q&A

- A query was raised on Korea's relevance to international targets such as commitments in the SDGs to contribute to developing countries. K SDGs were primarily national targets. According to the presenter, few targets relevant to the global SDG targets that constitute as international commitment such as the goal 17 target on share of the country's ODA as a percentage of its GNP are included. Out of 214 global indicators, 137 were dropped and 119 were added as national targets in the K-SDGs.
- A query was raised on the criteria for inclusion of civil society groups. Korea invited all willing participants to an offline meeting, which were structured into working groups and in the offline discussions the group members selected a team leader. It was a democratic process that worked very well.
- Focus on big data and use of technology was not elaborated. For the K-SDG design process academic and research data was mostly used as alternative data.

The second presenter was Mr. Oliver Schwank, Financing for Sustainable Development Office. The presentation focused on Integrated Financing Frameworks. The presenter summarised what it is, why it should be used and how it is done.

- Integrated financing framework is a tool to help countries develop a comprehensive financing framework of its SDG based national plans using costing.
- Rationale for using the tool: The international financing landscape is becoming more complex with more development partners and increased number of financing instruments including access to financial markets. The tool can help to explore all options /choices available to a country. Second, there is often a mis-match between short term flows and long term goals of a sustainable strategy. An integrated approach can help to adjust the financing policies towards long term goals. Third, the tool can help to build more coherence between different financing policies of a country. Current practice is that most resource mobilization both domestic and international, is done in an ad-hoc fashion. Furthermore, a credible domestic resource mobilization strategy can help to attract international commitments.
- Methodology of the tool. The tool includes four steps. (i) assessment and diagnosis of financing needs and the financing landscape for the country (ii) financing strategy which includes identifying and aligning financing policies to match the resource needs including identification of new financing policies such as taxation, investment plans, (iii) monitoring and review and (iv) governance mechanism in terms of who will conduct the process and to tie to the exercise to governance of SDG coordination in a country.

Summary of points from Q&A

- Importance of strengthening planning and budgeting/financing policies. One entry point is the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) based on which governments conduct annual budget cycles. The MTEF can be aligned to the development plan or is better positioned to be linked to planning.
- Linking financing to non-traditional sources. Examples mentioned include crowd funding and zakat as per the Indonesian experience. Integrated financing framework tool calls for identifying all financing options and their merit. Some sources maybe more suitable for specific priorities for example investment plans for infrastructure needs. Some innovative activities such as crowd funding may not have the scope for scale and maybe more suitable for funding specialised areas.

The third presenter was Mr. Alastair Alinsato who outlined Benin's experience.

- Benin started the SDG dialogue in the country with target prioritization. This was a 4-5 month process involving government, private sector, civil society, UN System and local governments. The process involved a total of 250 people. Benin used the United Nations Development Group (UNDG's) Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support (MAPS) tool and prioritized 49 SDG targets. With means of implementation factored – a total of 111 targets were identified.
- The national development plan and the sectoral development strategies were subsequently aligned to reflect these prioritized targets.
- Some of the targets were more ambitious than the global 2030 targets. For example, Benin aimed to achieve universal safe drinking water access by 2021, ten years ahead of 2030.
- Benin has taken the initiative to cost the priority targets using various methodologies - unit cost, historical cost and bench marking. The choice of methodology depended on data availability.
- An advocacy and mobilization strategy to improve resource allocation is now being designed. It aims to identify and channel resources to those goals with highest spill over effects and reaches the most in need.

Summary of points from Q&A

- In response to a question on bench marking methodology, the presenter explained that it involved doing costing for areas where no data was available such as costing of new development targets that Benin has not tracked before. To address this, they used data from Ghana and Ivory Coast which is similar in context to Benin.
- Representative from Jamaica shared relevant country experience. Jamaica has a national development plan aligned to 2030 with implementation plans developed every 3 years. The plan includes strategies and actions for both public and private sector. They are working with UNDP to identify innovative financing instruments such as green bonds, blue economy, crowd funding and are exploring which laws exist to support such schemes. They have just finished an exercise on understanding development partner priorities, how they are financing SDGs along the three Ps (people, planet and prosperity).

The fourth presenter was Ms. Elizabeth Hege, Research Fellow at IDDRI. She summarized research findings from a report that included country experiences of integrating SDGs to budgetary processes. A total of nine countries were included in the study. Four different methods and emerging initiatives were found and summarized in the presentation:

- Referencing SDGs in national budgeting. For example, Norway included quantitative references relevant to SDGs in its national budget.
- Justification of proposed expenditures in terms of their contribution to achieving SDGs in the budget proposal. Finland followed this method.
- Mapping budget allocations against the SDGs at goal level. This was done in Sri Lanka and Nepal.
- Use SDGs to evaluate budget performance. Country examples include France and Mexico.
- SDGs were used as a basis for budget negotiations by few countries. This included negotiations between ministries and between central and local governments. Country examples include Afghanistan and Norway.
- Some of the success factors and lessons show that leadership from the ministry of finance and high-level political support was necessary to implement this process.
- New initiatives on budget accountability can be based on the SDG framework – for example the parliament and civil society can use the SDGs as a basis to critique budget proposals.
- SDGs is not the first attempt to measure development progress beyond GDP and economic targets. France had developed alternative progress indicators that focus on inequality reduction and reducing of environmental footprint.
- Other SDG relevant budgeting processes / tools include gender responsive budgeting, green budgeting developed by OECD developing. A key observation is that the inequality lens is often missed in these tools - social and environmental needs assessments and approaches should be combined in the tools.

Summary of points from Q&A

- Countries with existing institutional set ups prior to the SDGs were better positioned to adopt these types of budgeting processes. This includes countries with existing development plans, corporate/ministerial plans and processes that linked budgeting to planning where the SDGs additionality could be easily integrated.
- Role of parliament was key to this process. In one country, an NGO promoting nutrition plans to train parliamentarians on how to track budget investments in nutrition.
- Cost assessment tools. IMF and SDSN are developing costing tools for SDGs. Rich experience exists from MDGs costing, which can be revisited.

The final presenter was Mr. Chakra Pani Acharya, Program Director, who shared experience from Nepal.

- Nepal's three tier governance system which has been functional since the new constitution, makes it complex for integrating SDGs to its planning system. The planning system involves central/federal level, provincial level and local level.
- Nepal has a long-term strategy with periodic planning carried out through the MTEF.
- Nepal has applied the MDG costing experience to generate a costing of the SDGs. It was challenging as MDGs were narrowly focused compared to the SDGs. Output and sometimes outcome costing methods were used. Some did not involve costing for example adoption of a policy required in the SDG targets. The total cost estimate was US\$ 18 billion for fifteen years which is huge and equivalent to 80 percent of GDP. Resource mobilization is therefore a challenge.
- National planning system is led by the national planning commission. Currently it is in the process of adopting the second five-year development plan since the adoption of the SDGs. In this plan, SDG targets from the SDG roadmap will be fully integrated. Long term development vision of the country is designed up to 2043 with 10 national goals – 4 on prosperity and 6 on happiness. These national goals are SDG plus with respect to the level of ambition in terms of duration and coverage.
- The MTEF is adopted to implement the plan. The MTEF incorporates three frameworks – results framework, macro-economic and fiscal framework and budgetary framework. These three year frameworks supports annual budgeting process.
- Scoring of projects and programmes in the budgeting process uses SDG framework.
- Nepal has initiated localization of SDGs to the local level. It has developed a manual to guide local governments on preparing periodic plans, MTEF and budget formulation combined with capacity building. Local governments have now started implementing these processes.

Session - Cross-cutting challenges – sharing of best practises

This session focused on building stakeholder coordination and buy in from civil servants, local governments, parliamentarians and supreme audit institutions. The session was chaired by Mr. Vusal Garaev, Head of Division, Ministry of Economy from Azerbaijan.

The first presenter of the session was Ms. Adriana Castro, Advisor of the SDG Commission of the National Planning Department who shared the experience of Colombia.

- To get civil servants buy in, a key message that helped engage them was to explain that SDGs reflect various aspects of development, that it is not something new and will not add new responsibilities but it is a new way of branding/structuring ongoing development work.
- Having an early institutional coordination set up was helpful. Building on an existing inter-institutional mechanism, Colombia adopted SDG coordination into the council of ministers commission, which met weekly. Furthermore, SDG coordination and planning discussions were introduced in the monthly planning meetings of the government where the chief of planning from each ministry met.
- To strengthen the coordination and achieve clarity with respect to the roles of various agencies, a lead entity and supporting entity were identified for each of the relevant SDG targets. This is work

in progress and aims to look at various public actions, programs and policies that would help to meet the target.

- Colombia is currently in the process of preparing its national development plan. In each chapter, a section on how national priorities contribute to SDGs would be discussed. The plan includes national targets which is mapped against primary and secondary SDGs they contribute to. As a next step, this alignment process will be done at the target level.
- Efforts are being made to integrate SDGs in the territorial development plans of municipal governments. Capacity building workshops are being conducted to local council candidates.
- Workshops to encourage monitoring and follow up by civil society private sector and academia are being conducted. Involvement of parliament has not been extensive. However, the parliament is involved in the approval of the national development plan and the coverage of SDGs in the plan will inform parliamentarians of the Agenda 2030. There is a UNDP supported project called Congress 2030 which is being designed for parliamentarians.
- Colombia was one of the pilot countries for SDG 5 auditing process. It was a good exercise, but it was challenging to understand the role of different agencies. A key lesson from the exercise was the importance of having organized information for such processes. A key finding from the audit process was the need for coordination and the recognition that gender equality is the responsibility of the private sector as well as public institutions.
- Colombia has a tax in its budget for gender, but it is difficult to understand how the tax can be implemented.
- Capacity is a challenge. For example, there is no resources to have a strong technical team to support the high level councillors to drive the SDG agenda forward.
- Small successes are visible. For example, UN Women's interventions on violence against women have encouraged municipal governments to allocate a gender budget. This is now being documented to promote replication widely.

Summary of points from Q&A

- Clarification point on the working groups. The presenter explained that working groups were set up for each target with lead and supporting entities. The purpose was to assign responsibilities for implementation and monitoring as agencies could not agree who was responsible for what. Working groups were set up for only those targets relevant to Colombia and many agencies participated in several working groups. The arrangement worked well for Colombia.
- Colombia also included SDG content in the civil servants training programme with support from UNDP.
- To accelerate work at the local level, the presenter shared their ambition to introduce voluntary reporting of local governments and the organization of a High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) type forum for local governments in Colombia. The forum can help to showcase best practices from local implementation.

The second presenter was Ms. Elizabeth Emanuel, Programme Director, Vision 2030 Jamaica Secretariat who shared the experience of Jamaica.

- One of the key success elements in Jamaica goes back to the 2006 Government Consultation Code of Practice which mandates that any national policy will have to go through wide consultation involving civil society, public sector, private sector before it is submitted to the Cabinet.
- This was applied in the design of its national development plan; 2009-2030. Efforts were made to extensively engage political parties as well to understand their direction and priorities and at the same time gauge their buy in for the plan. This has yielded positive outcomes, even with the change in political leadership, the government's commitment to the plan have not changed.
- In 2017, a UN MAPS mission assessed the readiness of countries to implement the SDGs. It was found that Jamaica's development plan aligned to the agenda at 91 percent. The MAPS mission suggested few changes to allow for alignment.

- While the national development plan is a long-term strategic document that spans 21 years, intermediate three-year implementation plans were developed against the 2030 targets.
- Supporting the plan, thematic working groups exist which meets every quarter to discuss progress, challenges and follow up.
- Monitoring of the national development and SDGs are combined.
- Ministerial plans and budget allocation proposals have to demonstrate alignment to both.
- Jamaica will be preparing a national report on its development plan and the SDGs in addition to the VNR.
- Efforts are being made to transfer SDGs knowledge and roles to local governments in 14 regions. The national planning institute is conducting capacity building workshops and conducts town hall meetings with the public including schools, youth and private sector during these visits to local areas.
- Parliamentarians are being engaged through consultation with political parties. Jamaica has a youth parliament and they are being tapped as well to promote the SDGs.

Summary of points from Q&A

- Role of the Youth Parliament clarified. The Youth Parliament does not have a formal legislative role but is a representative body and a good channel to reach organizations working on youth.
- A question was raised on how flexible and adaptable the long-term development plan is in Jamaica. The presenter explained that while strategic vision has been developed up to 2030, interim plans are made every 3 years which allows for separate target setting and flexibility to add targets.

The third speaker was Ms. Véronique Verbruggen, Senior Inter-Regional Adviser, Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government, DESA. She explained the role of the Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government which mainly emphasizes its work on SDG 16, strengthening accountable, and inclusive organizations. They have compiled a report on how countries have engaged parliament and supreme audit institutions based on reporting in the VNRs. The division also delivers an annual e-government survey which takes stock of countries' readiness to implement e-governance. Overall the division provides support to member states through research, evidence, knowledge sharing and through projects. Some of these initiatives include:

- Training for public servants who are often bombarded with reforms without the necessary capacity to implement those reforms. One global initiative involves working with schools and institutes that offer to training to public servants in identifying and agreeing on key competencies that public servants should have to put into practice the transformation work required by the Agenda 2030 and developing training material which will be delivered physically and online. Most of this work has taken place in Africa but are being initiated in all regions.
- Improving linkage between national and local authorities is key as local authorities are mostly in charge of implementation and service delivery. 13 of the 17 SDGs directly involve service delivery. Local governments' role on the SDGs need to be clarified and resources need to be provided. A good example is Bhutan where an awareness raising campaign in 2016 with the government led to the integration of the SDGs into local development plans. It has since then adjusted resource allocation formula to meet the SDG principles including prioritization of resource allocation to the poorest areas.
- Research work of the division include a paper published on the preparedness for implementing SDGs focusing on accountability and transparency mechanisms and the oversight role of supreme audit institutions in the implementation.
- A project is also being piloted in Senegal, Cameroon and Ethiopia's with the respective energy, water, land use and climate change relevant ministries to train analysts on modelling techniques and integrated assessments to identify more coherent policy making options in the field.

- Institutional dimension is very important. Consultation with stakeholders is often done but collaboration does not exist because stakeholders are not engaged in decision making and only approached for consultation.

Summary of points from Q&A

- A query was raised on whether training needs assessments were being done and how trainings are being done for public servants. The presenter clarified that the approach is to develop and agree on a harmonized set of competencies that public servants should have in each regional context which is taking time and then the training of trainers will be carried out to disseminate training to public officials.

The session was concluded by the Chair by sharing briefly the experience of Azerbaijan.

- Azerbaijan prepares an Annual report to the President on SDGs in addition to the VNR.
- The institutional arrangement for coordination of Agenda 2030 includes a policy council under the leadership of the Deputy Prime Minister.
- The national development plan has been adjusted to include SDG targets and indicators. Three working groups exist to support the process - social economic and environmental working groups and 1 monitoring group which looks at accountability.
- Azerbaijan will be submitting its second VNR this year.
- In 2018, a large-scale conference representing 26 countries was held which became known as the Baku Forum to share countries' experiences in implementing SDGs.
- To engage the parliament, the government worked with Inter-Parliamentary Union to develop a toolkit on SDG based awareness raising for parliamentarians which was translated to the local language – and delivered to parliamentarians which looked at oversight role that parliaments can play.
- The MAPs mission and rapid integrated assessment helped to adjust its national development plan – the level of alignment of SDGs with national priorities have since increased from 67 percent to 82 percent.

Session - Enhancing coherent support

This session covered the experience of development partners, particularly the UN system in delivering coherent support to countries to implement the SDGs. The session was chaired by Ms. Howaida Barakat, Head of Sustainable Development Unit, Ministry of Planning from Egypt.

The first presenter was Ms. Laurel Patterson from United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). She discussed UNDP's role as an integrator of multilateral support to countries which builds on a new General Assembly resolution. She described four elements of UNDP's support to countries and its role as an integrator on delivering SDG relevant assistance. This includes:

- Integrated policy solutions – This is achieved through work done on MAPS, the UNDG tool which UNDP has been implementing on the ground to support countries to align planning and budgeting with SDGs. Last year, UNDP conducted 38 MAPS missions with 27 entity partners. The MAPS missions look at country's situation and progress on coordinating the SDGs, presents a report and roadmap on supporting alignment and integrated policy solutions.
- Integrated tools and metrics. This includes tools gathered to harness data solutions and modelling of development solutions that looks at trade-offs and multipliers. An example is the International Futures initiative.
- Innovation and knowledge which includes developing innovation facilities and accelerator labs in countries which can help to experiment integrated solutions with different partners.
- SDG financing – which involves supporting countries with development finance assessments to identify available financing and support countries to mobilise new finance including domestic resource mobilization.

Summary of points from Q&A

- The representative from Jamaica highlighted UNDP's critical role to support the country which included a MAPs mission, findings of which have been useful to the government and its intermediate (three-year) planning efforts. UNDP is also assisting the government to develop an online dashboard to track SDG progress and is providing technical support to localize SDGs at the regional level. With regard to financing for development, UNDP sponsored a forum in Jamaica on innovative financing that included discussions on green bonds, blue bonds, crowd funding etc.
- Some of the analytical work resulting from the MAPS missions include an analysis of the types of accelerators seen in countries. For example, in Burkina Faso, it was found that advancing the humanitarian nexus and building coherence between the humanitarian and peace building actors in the country would serve as an accelerator to achieving its development goals.
- Representative from Bahrain stated that the country is receiving support from UNDP to compile the VNR and to support evidence-based policy making by strengthening its statistical system. UNDP also assisted to conduct consultation workshops with NGOs on SDGs.
- Representative from Colombia noted UNDP's constant role and support to the team even outside of projects. An example stated was UNDP accompanying government teams to local areas to do capacity building for municipal governments.
- A question on the Development System reform within the UN including the delinking of UNDP resident Representative and the Resident Coordinator (RC) role was made. The presenter shared her perspective that for UNDP, it will allow the agency to focus on its substantive role while it will also empower RCs to provide more of an oversight role than an operational one. The speaker mentioned that these outcomes will depend on how the transition gets implemented.

The second presenter was Mr. V. Sivagnanasothy, Secretary, Ministry of National Policies from Sri Lanka. Summary of points presented are:

- Sri Lanka has taken many steps to institutionalize SDGs in its national development framework by incorporating SDGs to its Vision 2025 development plan. SDGs have also been incorporated to sectoral and ministerial plans. The national budget call for its MTEF instructs all ministries to align its budget proposals to the SDGs and national development plans. The Department of National Planning has revised the national project submission form to include sections to allow for consideration of SDGs.
- With respect to institutional arrangements, the government through an act of parliament has established the Sustainable Development Council which provides guidance on the coordination and implementation of SDGs. Sri Lanka also has a Parliamentary Committee on SDGs to oversee progress.
- These efforts are complemented by the government's overall efforts towards results driven operation under the Managing for Development Results (MfDR) agenda which dictates development of results frameworks and KPIs for ministries and the budgeting process. SDGs have now been added to this process particularly by aligning the KPIs to include SDG priorities. This results agenda is cascaded to the sub-national level to provincial governments. UNDP is supporting to develop district and divisional plans and aligning them to the SDGs.
- There is a new drive to shift auditing from financial and compliance audits to performance audits. Complementing this, efforts are made to strengthen monitoring and evaluation culture in the government with emphasis on evaluation and learning.
- To harness partnerships a SDG forum is organized inviting civil society, private sector and development partners.
- A key challenge is the national statistical capacity. The periodic surveys such as Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES) and Demographic Health Survey (DHS) have small samples that do not allow data disaggregation beyond the district level.
- Efforts are being made to do SDG costing to identify resource needs to re-balance /harmonise development and growth regionally.

Summary of points from Q&A

- Bangladesh is implementing a performance management system but is struggling to identify meaningful alignment of projects and budgets to SDGs as the scope of the SDGs is so broad that any intervention can be linked to a goal. To address this, the presenter from Sri Lanka suggested using smaller number of KPIs – 5-6 smart indicators per ministry so that the prioritisation will automatically fall into place. This suggestion was also made to the IDRRRI colleague who had a query on how SDG alignments to budgeting can be made more valuable.
- The representative from Lebanon highlighted the challenges of countries that host large refugee populations and the need for mobilizing development finance beyond humanitarian assistance. According to the speaker, good planning, monitoring and accountability systems and good governance principles will attract donors and will help to identify bankable projects.

The third presenter of the session was Ms. Hanaa Singer, United Nations Resident Coordinator for Sri Lanka. She started her presentation by commenting on the UN reform process and supported the decision to delink UNDP and the RC system and sees more space and opportunity for building coherence in international support at the country level. She then outlined areas of UN support delivered in Sri Lanka.

- SDG tracker, an online platform co-developed with Department of Census and Statistics –the system includes sub-national level data. The Phase I of the project is now complete which included development of data for eight goals covering 51 % of indicators.
- Support to national budgeting process particularly UNICEF’s support to look at budgets through an Early Childhood Development (ECD) lens paved the way for evidence-based budget discussions.
- UNDP’s support to Department of National Planning to align SDGs with national and ministerial plans.
- FAO helped to conduct a first review of the agriculture sector involving 9 ministries.
- Support was provided to Department of Project Management and Procurement to strengthen evaluation processes including raising awareness of MPs and government officials and contributing to Sri Lanka’s national evaluation policy.
- UNDP is supporting the Finance Commission and local governance authorities to integrate SDGs in five provincial governments’ planning.
- Support to SDG financing by designing a social enterprise fund and a social impact capital fund. The first one supports incubated micro and small enterprises that contribute to social outcomes and includes providing them with mentorship, business support and training. The second one supports more mature enterprises on adopting business models that serve both social and business purposes.
- Pipeline projects include the SDG integrated solutions platform – one stop shop for data and ideas on SDGs. UNDP’s recently developed national human development report looks on how development benefited groups differently.

Summary of points from Q&A

- Budget analysis of social sectors is important. Traditionally Sri Lanka has demonstrated progressive social development. However, there are areas where achievement is low such as nutrition and ECD for which evidence-based research to guide policy makers to acknowledge the gaps and guide resource allocation from national budget has proven to be positive.
- Synergy of United Nations Country Team (UNCT) and the Regional Commissions such as ESCAP will be strengthened in the future as the new RC role will be coordinated through the Regional Commissions. ESCAP has to date played an important role in providing regional analysis including that on SDGs and supporting countries through the UN agencies on the VNR process.

The final presenter of the session was Ms. Mercedes Garcia-Escribano, Deputy Division Chief, Fiscal Affairs Department at the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The presenter summarized the findings of an estimation of resources that countries would need to achieve the SDGs in five areas: education, health, roads, electricity, water and sanitation. The main finding of the study show that countries need

to scale up its financing. A typical emerging market economy on average would need to increase its spending by 4 percentage points of GDP whereas a low-income country would need to scale its spending by 15 percentage points of GDP. The resource gap in total amounts to 0.5 percent of global GDP for 2030. To achieve this scaling up of financing, four points were considered important:

- Countries are in the driving seat of its development agenda and will need to lead the financing process.
- SDGs need to be embedded in national development plans, sectoral plans and budgets.
- Progress needs to be tracked through reliable performance monitoring systems.
- Beyond financing, tackling inefficiencies in spending is key.
- A key lesson is that countries particularly the low-income countries will not be able to bridge the financing gap through revenue generation alone, they will need the support of private sector, ODA, philanthropists and International Financial Institutions (IFIs).
- Countries should be capacitated to do macroeconomic management well and should ensure that the country's business environment is favourable for investments that will help to close the financing gap.

Summary of points from Q&A

- Clarification point on debt management and ability to achieve SDGs. The presenter reiterated the challenge of low-income developing countries to scale financing for SDGs and mentioned that if countries have debt issues, the short term goal would be to manage the debt while ensuring stable macro-economic status and growth. It was emphasized that countries need to take responsibility to make sure that international financing is spent efficiently.
- A query from Bangladesh on how to understand development partners' priorities and areas of interest in relation to the Agenda 2030 was made. The presenter emphasized that it is important for development partners to have well-articulated and coordinated assistance to countries. IMF provides technical assistance mostly in terms of domestic revenue collection, debt management and policy support to ensure stable/favourable macro-economic growth.
- The UN Resident Coordinator from Sri Lanka explained that as part of the UN reform, the country planning process will change. Before agencies had their own programme and planning documents which got consolidated as the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF). Now, the process will start with the development of one plan from which agencies will develop their respective and more detailed plans. This aims to reduce the fragmentation that exists now in delivering country level assistance.
- The Regional Commission for Latin America explained that they focus mostly on technical assistance and capacity building to countries on a range of areas such as statistics. The Regional Commissions also work on transboundary and regional issues including economic integration, trade, climate and infrastructure.

Day 2

Feedback session – addressing the challenges and showcasing policies with potential

The session was chaired by Mr. Benson K. Kimani, Director, Economic Planning, National Treasury and Planning, Kenya. This session captures feedback from the thematic working group sessions that were held to share challenges and solutions. Each group had a topic. The topics were stakeholder engagement, data and statistics, financing, cost assessments and budgeting and leaving no one behind. The following summarizes points shared by groups based on the discussions they had.

Stakeholder engagement

- To achieve effective private sector engagement, it is important to have incentives for participation and considerations need to be made with respect to time and other factors.
- The group recognized the role of UN and other agencies to broker meetings and provide safe spaces for open dialogue. This is critical for vulnerable or marginalized groups as they tend to have

limited trust in the government and would be more open to sharing their feedback with agencies such as the UN.

- Institutionalizing engagement through formal arrangements is important and effective.
- Story telling is a good method of triggering dialogue to promote the SDGs.
- The group also discussed the importance of engagement 'why are we engaging' question.
- It is important to document the various processes and institutional arrangements so that countries can build on the successes and avoid failures.
- Having political buy in was considered critical. Engagement of parliamentarians can be done using the self-assessment toolkit to identify and understand their role in contributing to the SDGs.
- Legal framework for coordination, planning, monitoring and evaluation processes can be an advantage.
- Building awareness of public servants is key to ensuring that they apply SDGs in the day to day work.
- Important to embed SDGs in education system and academia to stimulate the behavioural change and attitudes needed to move the SDG agenda forward.

Data and statistics

- The group discussed the importance of data disaggregation.
- Financing is a key challenge. The Cape Town Action Plan and Dubai Declaration on Financing Data provides direction for mobilizing resources.
- Importance of having proxy indicators was considered a best practice.
- Integrating data especially big data and alternative data sources is an opportunity.
- Other challenges include harmonizing data collection, addressing governance of data including institutional coordination, addressing the poor quality of data such as administrative data, compiling disaggregated data and timeliness of data dissemination – for example, periodic survey data is disseminated every five years or ten years and time taken by NSO and data collectors to verify data often results in outdated data dissemination. Other challenges include limited knowledge of data gathering for Goals 11 to 15, having clear role of data producers including NSO and statistical departments of line agencies. Statistical literacy is an issue as well, which inhibits utilization of data for impact assessments, evaluation and policy design.
- Some of the good practices include UNRC's support to evaluate national statistics availability and address gaps, aligning indicators to national data and use of proxy indicators to measure progress, use of non-official data such as big data, data collected and or produced by civil society and data potential of call centres. Geographic Information Systems and other technology capturing geographic elements can help to produce data relevant leave no one behind but attention should be given to those groups who might be excluded if they do not have access to technology to participate and contribute to data production.
- Having focal points from NSO and data producers with respect to SDG data coordination is important.
- United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) provides training for data producers and users.
- In-depth meeting at local level (district level) helps to better understand the leaving no one behind aspects and relevant data needs and availability.
- Having an SDG unit in the NSO was considered as a best practice.

Financing, cost assessments and budgeting

- The group reviewed experience of countries doing needs assessments and costing. The main take away from the discussions was the importance of aligning planning, monitoring and budgeting to achieve financing for SDGs.

- In some cases, benchmarking was used to do program costing. It was emphasized that recognition of national priorities as a starting point would help to carry out the costing and financing initiatives.
- Involvement of parliament has proven to be effective in allocating resources to implement SDGs.

Additional comments to the presentation covered the following points:

- There are multiple ways of approaching needs assessment exercises. One is to estimate the revenues and resources countries do not have but would need to implement the SDGs while the other is to focus on optimizing available resources for implementing SDGs. Benin is a good example where they applied the back-casting method which involved costing SDGs and estimating what the country would need.
- The group found that need assessments were an important step to support budget resource negotiations in the future and to push the financing for SDGs forward. A key point to note is to determine the governance of how to go about the needs assessments, who would do it and how it will be approached.
- The group recognized the difficulties in conducting needs assessments such as quantification of less concrete goals and the task of costing cross-sector approaches and integrated policies.

Leaving no one behind

- The group recognized that there is a need to approach leaving no one behind as a cross-cutting matter or aspect of the Agenda 2030.
- Commonly reported aspects of leave no one behind relate to social inclusion, inequality, protection, voice etc. The VNRs do not provide strong analysis on the leave no one behind elements and instead describe groups that are discriminated such as women, youth, and disability. But they do not focus on or analyse the groups that are at risk of falling behind when the development and SDG agenda gets implemented.
- Striking a balance between universal and targeted interventions is a challenge for countries.
- Data with respect to leave no one behind is a commonly stated challenge.
- However, the group presentation argued that addressing leaving no one behind goes beyond data gathering. It is important to get national human rights institutions, civil society and private sector on board to support country's efforts in this area. NSOs should be involved early on, at design stage of policies not at the implementation or impact stage.
- Administrative data such as data from social protection agencies can be a good source.
- Qualitative approaches are needed at national and subnational level to understand the situation of vulnerable groups in an in-depth manner.
- The UN is compiling guidance on identification of those who might be left behind. This relates to five root problems (i) identity issues, (ii) geography, (iii) socio-economic status, (iv) how groups are governed and (v) vulnerability to risks and shocks both natural and man-made. There is intersection between these factors which needs to be recognized for example, – those left behind more can be at risk of being affected by natural hazards. This guidance can help to have a structured dialogue on the root causes of why people are left behind and to understand who they might be.
- Several country experiences on addressing this agenda were discussed. One case involved subnational governments receiving grants to address challenges facing vulnerable population.
- Legislation was considered key to mandate implementation of policies to protect the rights of those left behind.

Panel Discussion: Good practices for enhancing implementation of the Agenda

This panel discussion was the final session of the workshop and was chaired by Ms. Maha Abdulla Sabt, Chief, Information & eGovernment Authority, Bahrain. The session focused on actions that help to scale up peer learning and knowledge sharing for implementation of the Agenda 2030.

The first panellist was Mr. Thomas Wollnik, Head of programme, Partners for Review. The panellist introduced Partners for Review. It was set up in 2016 during the process of compiling Germany's VNR. It is a network of countries that wanted to strengthen the reporting process when developing VNRs. It is supported by the German Development Cooperation.

- A key lesson of the network hinges on the importance of exchange – exchange of experiences. To achieve this, it is important to provide the atmosphere to openly discuss challenges and obstacles. Peer learning can be best achieved through less formal, safe spaces that helps to build trust of those who participate.
- Another lesson is to recognize the importance aligning stakeholders at different levels from national to regional to global. This has implications for various areas including data comparability at the global level.
- Partnerships have to be fostered within groups and amongst groups. So, it is important to foster interaction between civil society, between agencies within government etc. At the same time, it is important to build partnerships between government, civil society, private sector and academia.
- Specialised partnerships are important. This could be clustered groups based on stages of development or expert group meetings that can address specific issues or interests.
- Using existing partnerships and existing knowledge exchange platforms should be tapped as much as possible.
- To allow frequent exchange, digital tools and platforms help. For example, the Partnerships for Review has an online platform for countries to post problems, ask for ideas which promotes peer learning.
- The network encourages follow up after the HLPF and VNR review process.
- The next Partners for Review meeting will be held in Mexico.

Summary of points from Q&A

- The importance of online platforms. The countries/participants can register for the Partners for Review network. It is a first attempt to provide an exchange platform. It is for members only.
- Partnerships for Review works on knowledge exchange relevant to three work streams; (i) documenting examples on partnership agreements (ii) building coherence between ministries and with sub-national actors and (iii) data /statistical challenge. For example if a country is not getting positive response on engaging civil society for its VNR process or does not know how to select suitable actors for the VNR process they can post a question and the network will match that post with a country/case where this was addressed.
- A query was made on whether the network has an understanding of, or engages with, countries that have not submitted VNRs. According to the presenter, initially the network was set up for those who submitted VNRs but now they will focus on those who do not do voluntary reporting. For example, it is difficult to get the US government to do a VNR at the national level but there are alternative levels such as at the city level where there might be interest to do VNRs so the network will try to do reach those interested parties.

The second presenter was Mr. Mohamed Ali Nause Russel, Director, Governance Innovation Unit, Prime Minister's Office, Bangladesh. He started the presentation by giving a background to the Governance Innovation Unit which acts as a think tank to assist the Prime Minister on governance related issues. He summarized Bangladesh's experience:

- Past governments had election manifestos that drew clear and strong linkages with the SDGs. This helped the national alignment and SDG mainstreaming process.
- To localize indicators – Bangladesh aims to have 39 national indicators and one indicator per district (in total 64 district specific indicators). The district indicators reflect the leave no one behind agenda strongly.
- Challenges for the country include applying sustainability in policy making and in addressing trade-offs between economic growth and environmental goals.

- There is a need to think in a transformative way to achieve the goals by 2030. That has not come through yet.
- Performance based budgeting is carried out but linking results and investments and understanding impact of financing is missing.
- Peer learning is very key. Important to have country clusters, perhaps countries of similar nature or stage of development might work better.

Summary of points from Q&A

- A query was raised on how the election manifesto prioritization looked like across the political party spectrum. According to the presenter, the alignment and reflection of SDGs is very strong, and this has proven to be an advantage in the adoption of SDGs in the government's priorities.
- One of the participants reiterated the importance of having a Community of Practice for knowledge sharing.

The final presenter of the session was Ms. Gisele Fernandez Ludlow, First Secretary, Global Issues Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mexico. Her presentation covered the following points:

- VNRs allow for an important process, a means to implementing the SDGs and not an end in itself.
- Lessons learnt and best practices shared through regional mechanisms such as the Regional Commissions are helpful. More opportunities need to be created to engage and match needs with expertise between countries. Partners for Review is a good initiative.
- Partnerships with other national actors particularly civil society and youth are key because they are the most up to date in terms of information on what has been done. Civil society and youth offer great peer learning opportunities.
- It is important to be confident in sharing things that did not work or should be avoided in the future.
- In Mexico, initially civil society engagement was done in an ad-hoc fashion. This was then formalized through a law. The law was then further revised to include government institutions that have non-discrimination mandates or institutions that address interests of vulnerable groups.

Summary of points from Q&A

- Peer learning on specialized areas such as planning, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation and statistics would be helpful.
- Objective reviews of country performance including what worked and what did not, needs to come into place. The VNRs currently do not fulfil this purpose. It is important to identify a neutral stakeholder to take up the task of doing an independent review. One option is for countries to do peer reviews of each other and supreme audit institutions can help to fill this role. A good country example is Indonesia.

The session was concluded with final remarks from Mr. Friedrich Soltau who thanked the participants and noted the importance of peer learning which was clearly evident from the discussions in the workshop. He also noted the follow up initiatives of VNR shared by countries and recognized the need for more focused peer learning that covers detailed topics as per the feedback from participants.

A capacity development workshop: Accelerating national implementation of the 2030 Agenda

9-10 April 2019

UNHQ

CONFERENCE ROOM 6

Introduction

The 2030 Agenda and the sustainable development goals (SDGs) constitute a comprehensive plan of action to eradicate poverty and ensure sustainable development. Referring to action at the national level, the 2030 Agenda provides as follows: “We encourage all member states to develop as soon as practicable ambitious national responses to the overall implementation of this Agenda. These can support the transition to the SDGs and build on existing planning instruments, such as national development and sustainable development strategies, as appropriate.”¹

Countries have identified a range of concrete capacity development needs for SDG implementation.² Many countries are unable to follow-up on the gaps and challenges identified to implement the 2030 Agenda due to factors such as human and resource constraints, poor means of implementation, weak strategic planning and inadequate multi-sector and multi-ministerial coordination. The reported needs are generally related to the following areas:

- Strengthening systems of data collection and analysis and statistics;
- Mainstreaming the SDGs in national development plans, sub-national and sectoral plans;
- Strengthening institutional capacity and ensuring proper coordination between national, sub-national and local levels of government;
- Enhancing Institutional arrangements and coordination;
- Strengthening stakeholder engagement;
- Creating effective national monitoring and evaluation systems;
- Strengthening means of implementation: cost evaluations, budgeting and resource mobilization; and
- SDG specific technical support.

Objective

The objective of the workshop will be to utilize peer-learning to foster implementation of the 2030 Agenda, drawing on issues identified in the course of its implementation. DESA’s experience with peer-learning workshops has demonstrated the value of this approach. The workshop seeks to support countries in building coherent policies for sustainable development, integrating good practices, lessons learned and recommendations from other countries for implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The focus is on building capacity to identify and translate the gaps, challenges and recommendations identified at the country level into actionable and effective solutions for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

¹ Para. 78.

² See e.g., DESA, [Synthesis of Voluntary National Reviews 2018](#) (2018).

The workshop aims at providing government officials with strategies and tools to advance implementation the SDGs, through peer learning regarding commonalities and specificities regarding challenges, lessons learned and good practices and identifying the additional support needed by these countries.

The workshop will also explore how the United Nations system and development partners can better support follow-up actions to national review processes.³

The workshop will be interactive in nature, designed to foster exchange of ideas. A sharpened focus will be on capacity development needs related to: (a) strengthening stakeholder engagement; (b) data and statistics; (c) financing, cost assessments and budgeting; and (d) leaving no one behind.

Participants

Participants will be mainly government officials from capitals engaged in national implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. The workshop will also bring together some United Nations, representatives from Country Teams, Regional Commissions, and development partners to discuss how to better support national level follow-up actions and implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

³ 2030 Agenda, para. 79.

PROGRAMME

| DAY 1 | |
|---------------|--|
| 10:00 – 10:15 | <p>Welcome and opening</p> <p>Mr. Alexander Trepelkov, Officer-in-Charge, Division for Sustainable Development Goals, DESA</p> <p>Dr. Jong Soo Yoon, Head of the United Nations Office of Sustainable Development (UNOSD)</p> |
| 10:15 – 11:30 | <p>Accelerating implementation – priority capacity development needs</p> <p>Chair: Dr. Oktorialdi, Assistant Minister for Equity and Regional Planning, Ministry of National Development Planning, Indonesia</p> <p><i>Introduction and overview</i> – Mr. Friedrich Soltau, Senior Sustainable Development Officer, Division for Sustainable Development Goals, DESA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation of analysis of countries’ capacity development needs in relation to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda • Purpose and aims of the meeting <p>Brief presentations on priority capacity development needs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Ibra Sounkarou Ndiaye, Senegal • Ms. Regina Gallego, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) <p><i>Guiding questions:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What areas of implementation have proved most challenging? What are the main capacity gaps countries have identified? 2. What steps have been taken to address the capacity gaps identified in the implementation of the Agenda? <p>Q&A</p> |
| 11:30 – 11:45 | Break |
| 11:45 – 13:00 | <p>“Nationalizing” the Agenda</p> <p>Chair: Ms. Verena Klinger-Denger, Counsellor, Permanent Mission of Germany to the United Nations</p> <p>Brief presentations on experiences in translating the Agenda into national policy frameworks and budgets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Hak-Kyun Maeng, Director of Sustainable Development Strategy Division, Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Korea • Mr. Oliver Schwank, Financing for Sustainable Development Office |

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|---------------|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mr. Alastaire Alinsato, Benin - Ms. Elizabeth Hege, Research Fellow, IDDRI - Mr. Chakra Pani Acharya, Program Director, Nepal <p><i>Guiding questions:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What has been the experience with integrating the SDGs into national development plans and other policy frameworks? 2. How have countries linked their national priorities in implementing the Agenda with national and sectoral budgets and financing frameworks? <p>Q&A</p> |
| 13:00 – 14:00 | Lunch break |
| 14:00 – 15:30 | <p>Cross-cutting challenges – sharing of best practises</p> <p>Chair: Mr. Vusal Garaev, Head of Division, Ministry of Economy, Azerbaijan</p> <p><i>Mini-panel:</i> Brief country presentations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Adriana Castro, Advisor of the SDG Commission of the National Planning Department Colombia • Ms. Elizabeth Emanuel, Programme Director, Vision 2030 Jamaica Secretariat, Jamaica • Mr. Federico Buyolo, Director General, Spain • Ms. Véronique Verbruggen, Senior Inter-Regional Adviser, Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government, DESA <p><i>Guiding questions:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How to obtain the buy-in of different government entities and civil servants? 2. What mechanisms have worked for addressing interlinkages in SDG implementation? 3. How to engage local authorities in SDG implementation? 4. What are good practices in promoting the participation of parliamentarians? 5. How can the findings of supreme audit institutions contribute to SDG implementation? <p><i>Open discussion</i></p> |
| 15:30 – 15:45 | Break |
| 15:45 – 17:30 | <p>Enhancing coherent support</p> <p>Chair: Ms. Howaida Barakat, Head of Sustainable Development Unit, Ministry of Planning, Egypt</p> <p><i>Mini-panel:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Laurel Patterson, United Nations Development Programme • Mr. V. Sivagnanasothy, Secretary, Ministry of National Policies, Sri Lanka |

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|---------------|---|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Hanaa Singer, United Nations Resident Coordinator for Sri Lanka • Ms. Mercedes Garcia-Escribano, Deputy Division Chief, Fiscal Affairs Department, International Monetary Fund (IMF) <p><i>Guiding questions:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is the experience of UN country teams in supporting national follow-up? 2. How can the United Nations system better support follow-up actions? 3. What is the role of the Regional Commissions in the follow-up and how can their support be enhanced? 4. Which other partners can potentially support national follow-up activities? | |
| DAY 2 | | |
| 9:30 – 9:45 | Introduction of topics and breaking up into parallel WGs (Secretariat) Venue: <u>Conference Room 6</u> Topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stakeholder engagement - Data and statistics - Financing, cost assessments and budgeting - Leaving no one behind | |
| 9:45 – 11:15 | <u>Conference Room: E</u> WG A: Stakeholder engagement Kick-off presentation by: Ms. Naiara Costa, Division for Sustainable Development Goals, DESA Facilitated exchange of experiences Outcome: 5-10 good practices | <u>Conference Room: 6</u> WG B Data and statistics Kick-off presentation by: Benjamin Rae, Statistics Division, DESA Facilitated exchange of experiences Outcome: 5-10 good practices |
| 11:15 – 11:30 | Break | |
| 11:30 – 13:00 | <u>Conference Room: 6</u> WG C: Financing and cost assessments Kick-off presentation by: Ms. Vanessa Fajans-Turner, Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) Facilitated exchange of experiences Outcome: 5-10 good practices | <u>Conference Room: E</u> WG D: Leaving no one behind Kick-off presentation by: Ms. Aleksandra Plesko, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) Facilitated exchange of experiences Outcome: 5-10 good practices |
| 13:00 – 14:00 | Lunch break | |
| 14:00 – 15:30 | Feedback session – addressing the challenges and showcasing policies with potential | |

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|---------------|--|
| | <p>Chair: Mr. Benson K. Kimani, Director, Economic Planning, National Treasury and Planning, Kenya (TBC)</p> <p>Each thematic working group shares a challenge and a good practice or solution related to the topic.</p> <p>Q&A</p> |
| 15:30 – 15:45 | Break |
| 15:45 – 17:00 | <p>Panel Discussion: Good practices for enhancing implementation of the Agenda</p> <p>Chair: Ms. Maha Abdulla Sabt, Chief, Information & eGovernment Authority, Bahrain</p> <p><i>Guiding questions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Thomas Wollnik, Head of programme, Partners for Review • Mohamed Ali Nause Russel, Director, Governance Innovation Unit, Prime Minister’s Office, Bangladesh • Ms. Gisele Fernandez Ludlow, First Secretary, Global Issues Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mexico <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What can be done to scale up peer learning for implementation of the 2030 Agenda? 2. What can be done to facilitate sharing of lessons learned and good practices? 3. What kinds of partnerships are facilitating capacity development activities? |
| 17:00 – 17:15 | Wrap-up of the workshop |