Voluntary Local Reviews in Zimbabwe

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Introduction

• Voluntary Local Review is a process in which local authorities voluntarily review progress and follow-up on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

• A vehicle for sharing experiences, challenges and lessons learnt.

• Open avenues for new partnerships.

• VLRs enables local authorities to engage communities thereby strengthening accountability and inclusiveness of policymaking process.
• The purpose of VLRs is to monitor progress in SDG implementation as well as to share experiences, successes, challenges and possible solutions, with a view to accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

• VLRs leverage on resources availability at community level and showcasing how communities are contributing to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals.

• They provide a platform for localizing SDGs, an opportunity for stakeholders to contribute to development and enable sharing of experiences and best practices.

• Localizing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) entails integrating them in the design, implementation and monitoring of sub-national plans and putting sub-national governments at the centre of the SDGs.
Voluntary Local Review in Zimbabwe
Progress on VLRs

• 2 pilot Voluntary Local Reviews were conducted for Harare City and Victoria Falls Town in 2020.

• In 2023, 4 VLRs were undertaken for Bulawayo City, Zvishavane Town, Bikita Rural and Mutasa Rural.

• Plans are underway to cascade VLRs to all local authorities.
Progress on VLRs

• The VLR process is being led by the Ministry of Public service, Labour and Social Welfare in collaboration with the Ministry of Local Government and Public Works.

• VLRs are being conducted with support from the United Nations system, particularly UNDESA, UNRCO, UNDP, ECA, IOM among others.
Lessons learnt from the Pilot VLRs

• Local authorities have integrated the 2030 Agenda in their Strategic Plans.

• Prior to the Covid-19 Pandemic, remarkable progress had been made at local level mainly in SDGs 3, 4, 6, 9 and 11:

  • Various initiatives to include the marginalized/disadvantaged communities in development planning and implementation.

  • Prioritization of SDGs (SDG 2 End hunger, SDG 3 Good health and wellbeing, SDG 4 Quality education, SDG 6 Clean water and sanitation and SDG 5 Gender equality).
Lessons learnt from the Pilot VLRs

• Institutions to coordinate SDGs implementation were put in place.

• Collaboration with development partners especially in areas of health, education, the environment and civil protection.

• Local leadership plays a key role in coordinating SDGs and national development plans. For RDCs - village development committees and ward development committees.
Lessons learnt from the Pilot VLRs

- Facilitated peer-to-peer learning among local authorities
- Promote accountability to citizens.
- Reflected initiatives being implemented to foster development at local levels while considering the three aspects of sustainable development that are social, economic, and environmental
- Provided a knowledge repository and a framework that can be used to cascade the VLRs to other local authorities.
Lessons learnt from the Pilot VLRs

- VLRs increases public awareness, knowledge and perceptions of SDGs and empower local communities and citizens to take action in their own local communities.

- The Devolution agenda will accelerate sustainable development and enables communities to directly benefit from resource endowments within their local communities.
BENEFITS OF VLRS

• VLRS provides a clear roadmap for more balanced and equitable development.
• VLRS provides a platform for localizing SDGs.
• Provides an opportunity for stakeholders (private sector, civil society, academia, residents, etc) to contribute to national development.
• Enables sharing of experiences and best practices.
• Enhance awareness of SDGs and national development plans at local level.
Benefits of VLRs

• Enables people centered decision making that is more relevant to address problems being faced at the local level.
• Vehicle to initiate local action, and people action that is required for the acceleration of SDGs implementation.
• VLRs reflect real progress being made in attaining SDGs since they are done at local level.
• Can be utilized by policy makers to inform evidence-based development plans and interventions.
KEY MESSAGES FROM VLRS

1. **Financing** – Various financing mechanisms (Strengthening domestic resource mobilization is key).

2. **Institutional and Policy Reforms** - Creation and institutionalization of inter-agency steering committees on sustainable development supports the coordination of efforts toward the implementation, monitoring, and reporting on sustainable development progress.

3. **Capacity Building** - Capacity building of local authorities should be prioritized.

4. **Multi-Level Partnerships** - Horizontal and vertical partnerships for sustainable development initiatives. The local authorities need to establish mechanisms for SDGs peer-review to strengthen the learning around best practices on SDGs implementation, monitoring, and reporting.
OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

- **Lack of disaggregated localized data** - Local authorities are facing limitations on data availability.

- **Domestic Resource Mobilisation** - CSOs, private sector and other stakeholders are major players in resource mobilization for capital and humanitarian projects.

- **Alignment of M&E Systems** - Alignment and synchronization of the local monitoring and evaluation systems with SDG targets and indicators as central to tracking progress and reporting on SDGs implementation.

- **Awareness Raising** - Raising public awareness of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 should be supported.
The SDGs must be fully integrated and mainstreamed into local authorities’ development plans and strategies.

Climate change is affecting food production. Accelerated uptake of climate proofing agriculture should be considered.

PPPPs should be supported.

Elaborate framework on how VLRs will be integrated into Voluntary National Reviews.
Thank you