



# VNR LABS HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM

## Advancing integrated SDG planning and implementation: the role of Voluntary National Reviews and Voluntary Local Reviews

11 July, 1:15 p.m. - 3 p.m.

Secretariat Building 15th floor, Rooms 1522 and 1523

In September 2023, United Nations Member States gathered at highest level at the SDG Summit in New York and committed to a series of actions to accelerate progress on SDG implementation. Recognizing the need for multilevel coordination to achieve the 2030 Agenda, the Political Declaration of the Summit includes calls to further localize the SDGs and advance integrated planning and implementation at the local level.<sup>1</sup>

Increasingly, voluntary reporting at both national and local levels has become a vehicle for advancing such multilevel coordination and integrated planning. Eight years into the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, national governments are increasingly utilizing Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) not only to highlight national level efforts, advances, and challenges in SDG implementation, but to also capture the efforts of local and regional governments and other local stakeholders in support of SDG implementation. At the same time, the global Voluntary Local Review (VLR) movement continues to accelerate. Since the first VLRs were presented in 2018, over 300 VLRs have been published. These reports can complement the VNRs and enrich the national story when it comes to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda by ensuring a more detailed and differentiated assessment of progress, gaps and challenges in states, provinces, cities, municipalities, towns, districts, and villages.

As with VNRs, the process of preparing VLRs provides important benefits in and of itself. These include the opportunity to evaluate the performance of existing policies, programmes, and institutional set-ups, including stakeholder engagement mechanisms; to improve data collection and analysis and assess data

<sup>1</sup> A/RES/78/1, Para 38 (s)



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gaps; and to advance inclusive governance and foster participation from community members and groups among those that tend to be “most left behind.” However, to be most impactful, voluntary reports at all levels must also lead to action, including in terms of strategic planning and budgeting.

From a global perspective, some progress has been made in advancing integrated SDG planning and implementation, including through the linking of national and local voluntary reporting processes. Through the connection between VLRs and VNRs, new channels of dialogue have opened, many of which resulted in better coordination and more effective national delivery of the SDGs. However, to fully realize the SDGs and fulfil the commitments set out in the Political Declaration of the SDG Summit significant improvements in this area are required.

The present VNR/VLR Lab will include contributions from national and local governments that have prepared recent voluntary national or local reviews, as well as from key UN system, relevant stakeholders and representatives of civil society. The event will provide participants the opportunity to exchange experiences and good practices regarding how VNRs and VLRs are contributing to integrated SDG planning and implementation.

Key Questions for discussion will include:

- How have VNR and VLR processes strengthened multilevel governmental dialogue, planning and action in terms of SDG implementation? Are there concrete advances in SDG implementation in your country that can be attributed to improved coordination between VNR and VLR processes?
- How are VNRs and VLRs facilitating inclusive governance in which no one is left behind? For national and local governments that have prepared more than one voluntary report, how have efforts to involve all stakeholders expanded and evolved based on your early experiences?
- What good practices exist in terms of:
  - mainstreaming gender and human rights in national and local planning, implementation and reporting?
  - Including the voice and participation of segments of society that tend to be left behind, including women, youth, older persons, indigenous peoples, and persons with disabilities in national and local reporting.



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## Draft Programme

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<p><b>1:15-1:25</b></p>	<p><b>Opening</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Amson Sibanda</b>, Chief, National Strategies and Capacity Building Branch, Division for Sustainable Development Goals, UN DESA</li> </ul>
<p><b>1:25-2:20</b></p>	<p><b>VNR/VLR dialogue</b> Moderator: <b>Carol Pollack</b>, Inter-Regional Advisor, Division for Sustainable Development Goals, UN DESA</p> <p><b>Perspectives from International Level</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Emilia Saiz</b>, Secretary-General, United Cities and Local Governments <i>- Key findings from 2024 edition of Towards the Localization of the SDGs</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Perspectives from National Government</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Mara Cossu</b>, Deputy Head of Unit, Instruments and technologies for sustainable development, Ministry of Environment and Energy Security, Italy</li> <li>- <b>Lusanda Batala</b>, Senior Sector Expert, National Planning Commission, National Planning Commission, South Africa</li> </ul> <p><b>Perspectives from Local Governments</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Nicole Unterseh</b>, Deputy Mayor, Bonn (Germany) (tbc)</li> <li>- <b>Ana Ciuti</b>, Undersecretary of International Relations, Buenos Aires (Argentina)</li> <li>- <b>Tomonori Hiroike</b>, Director for Planning and Coordination, Office of the Governor for Policy Planning, Tokyo (Japan)</li> </ul> <p>Q &amp; A</p>
<p><b>2:20-2:50</b></p>	<p><b>Next Steps in UN System and International Organization Support</b></p> <p>Moderator: <b>Jurgen Gafke</b>, Senior Programme Management Officer, Division for Sustainable Development Goals, UN DESA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Rio Hada</b>, Chief of the Equality, Development, and Rule of Law Section, OHCHR</li> </ul>



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- **Mareike Eberz**, Economic Affairs Officer, Office of the Executive Secretary, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) (on behalf of all five UN Regional Commissions)
- **Stefano Marta**, Head of Unit, Smart and Sustainable Cities, OECD

Q & A

2:50-3:00

Closing of the VNR Lab

- **Shipra Narang Suri**, Chief, Urban Practices Branch, UN Habitat

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