Agenda Item 4: Voluntary National Reviews: follow-up and review to accelerate implementation of the 2030 Agenda

ESCAP Hall, United Nations Conference Center, Bangkok
28th March 2023 (09:00 - 12:00)

Background

The Asia-Pacific Forum for Sustainable Development (APFSD) is an annual, inclusive intergovernmental forum to support follow-up and review of progress on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the regional level. By identifying regional trends and sharing best practices and lessons learned, this regional platform aims to inform, empower, and support Asia-Pacific countries (especially least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States) in their efforts to achieve the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and their targets set out by the 2030 Agenda.

The 10th APFSD will be organized from 27-30 March 2023 under the theme “Accelerating the recovery from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at all levels in Asia and the Pacific” at the United Nations Conference Center (UNCC) in Bangkok, Thailand.

The 2030 Agenda encourages member states to conduct regular and inclusive reviews of progress through voluntary national reviews (VNRs). Through ESCAP Resolution 73/1, member States resolved to support follow-up and review of progress on the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs at the regional level through supporting the presentation of voluntary national reviews. The APFSD provides an opportunity to share regional perspectives and good practice on follow up and review and support the presentation of voluntary national reviews at the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) in 2023.
The VNR session at the Forum aims to strengthen VNR preparation through identifying regional commonalities and lessons learned from reviews undertaken so far. Furthermore, the session will facilitate the exchange of good practice and lessons on how member States are utilizing the VNR process to strengthen evidence-based policy on the SDGs.

The objective of the session is to facilitate the exchange of good practice and lessons on how member States and stakeholders are utilizing the VNR process to strengthen evidence-based policy on the SDGs. Through two interactive panels the session aims to stimulate discussion on how South-South Cooperation can add value to the VNR process and can strengthen efforts to rescue the SDGs. It will aim to discuss specific reforms that countries that are undertaking to utilize evidence on those left furthest behind in the VNR, and policymaking process and the important role civil society can play.

In 2023, eleven countries from the region will be preparing their VNR: Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Fiji, the Maldives, Mongolia, Singapore, Tajikistan, Timor-Leste, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Vietnam. All these countries are presenting their VNRs for the second time. Second generation VNRs play a critical part of the follow up and review process, as they can facilitate the integration of SDGs into policymaking and planning processes and accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

**The Session**

The session will feature two interactive panels. Each panel will feature interventions from countries presenting their VNR in 2023 and will include government officials and key stakeholders, including from the private sector, civil society and the parliament. Each panel will be facilitated by a UN Resident Coordinator from countries that are conducting VNRs in 2023, who will also serve as discussants.

The first panel will focus on how South-South Cooperation and VNR Twinning can leverage the impact of VNRs on SDG acceleration. It will aim to stimulate discussion from government officials and stakeholders on how South-South Cooperation and twinning of VNR countries add value to the VNR process and can strengthen efforts to rescue the SDGs.
The second panel will explore how VNRs can promote better use of evidence in policy making, particularly in relation to targeting inequalities and those being left behind. It will aim to discuss specific reforms countries that are undertaking to collect and utilize evidence on those left furthest behind in the VNR and policymaking process and the important role civil society can play.

The session will be followed by an opportunity for country and stakeholder statements.

### Programme

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*The purpose of this panel to stimulate discussion on how South-South Cooperation and VNR twinning can strengthen efforts to rescue the SDGs. It will involve input from governments and stakeholders involved in the current 2023 VNR twinning programme. The panel discussion will hear from their lessons and experiences on twinning and how this adds value to the VNR process and strengthens South-South cooperation on the SDGs.*

**Twinning panel moderated by:**

Mr. Tapan Mishra, UN Resident Coordinator, Mongolia - Confirmed

**Opening speaker:**

Ms. Dima Al-Khatib, Director of the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC) – (3 minutes) – *pre-recorded video*

Mr. Otabek Izatillaev, Head of the Department of work with ratings and indices, Executive Secretary of the Parliamentary Commission for monitoring the implementation of SDGs, Republic of Uzbekistan

Mr. Balchinluvsan Ikhagvasuren, Director General of Integrated Development Policy Department, Ministry of Economy and Development, Government of Mongolia (online)
Panel discussion

Panel 2: Using the VNR to strengthen evidence-based policy on sustainable development and targeting those left behind (1 hour)

The purpose of this panel is to stimulate discussion and interaction on how the VNR can promote better use of evidence in policy making, particularly in relation to targeting inequalities and those being left behind.

Panel moderated by:
Ms. Karima El Korri, UN Resident Coordinator for Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei Darussalam

H.E. Mr. Fidelis Leite Magalhães, Minister of Presidency of Council of Ministers, Government of Timor-Leste

H.E. Mr. Pagnathun Theng, Director General of Planning, Ministry of Planning, Royal Government of Cambodia

Dr Huraini Hurairah, Director of Wawasan Brunei Office, Prime Minister’s Office, Head of Secretariat for the Special National Coordinating Committee on Sustainable Development Goals, Government of Brunei Darussalam

Ms. Urantsooj Gombosuren, Chairperson, Centre for Human Rights and Development, Mongolia

Ms. Villaney Remengesau, Co-chair of the Pacific Disability Forum, Palau

Concluding Remarks
Mr. Kaveh Zahedi, Deputy Executive Secretary, ESCAP

Country and Chair to facilitate the country and stakeholder statements
For information, please contact Ms. Caitlin Porter, Senior VNR Advisor at caitlin.porter@un.org or escap-apfsd@un.org.

Visit the APFSD website at https://www.unescap.org/events/apfsd10

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