



Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development and Voluntary National Reviews (VNR) Capacity Building Workshop for Pacific SIDS

21-25 October 2019

Samoa TATTE Convention Centre (STCC), Apia, Samoa

Background

The 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) embody the strategic vision and aspirations of all countries for the future of development. Its implementation will require comprehensive actions at the global, regional and sub-regional levels, as indicated in General Assembly Resolution 70/1 on Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development provides a unique opportunity to share perspectives on the proposed theme of “*Accelerating progress towards SDGs in Asia and the Pacific*” to be addressed at the 7th Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD) in 2020. It aims to foster deepened and shared understanding of member States and other stakeholders in the Pacific on cross-border challenges and ways forward to accelerate the balanced implementation of the 2030 Agenda at the national and regional levels. The SAMOA Pathway Mid-term Review and SDG Summit can also be leveraged to accelerate SDG progress in the Pacific.

The 2030 Agenda defines a robust follow-up and review process and encourages countries to conduct voluntary national reviews (VNRs) to assess progress related to attaining the sustainable development goals nationally. Voluntary national reviews present an opportunity for a country to assess progress in the achievement of the SDGs and plan appropriate policies, structures, processes and programmes to effectively achieve them. The VNR process has allowed countries to take stock of their current policies towards the SDGs, and to map out required means of implementation and develop their own recommendations for further work. Ensuring that the VNR process results in robust follow up will be key for ensuring continued implementation of the SDGs. There is an increased interest by countries in follow-up to the voluntary national reviews, to realize their potential as a means to accelerate implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

After the 2019 HLPF, 142 countries will have presented VNRs at the HLPF, with several countries having presented a second or third report. Countries themselves have identified a range of challenges and gaps in their VNRs. These include the need to create ownership of the SDGs, increase stakeholder engagement; integrate the SDGs into national sustainable development strategies and development plans; strengthen systems data collection and analysis; and create effective national monitoring and evaluation systems. Countries also expressed the challenge of strengthening institutional capacity to make institutions fit for delivery of SDGs and ensuring proper coordination between national, subnational and local levels of government.

Meeting Objectives:

The forum provides an opportunity for the Pacific to identify key regional issues, challenges and opportunities that impact on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

while confronted by the impact of climate change and an increasing threat of natural disasters. It provides a space for the identification and amplification of the specific situation of small island developing States ahead of discussions within the Asia-Pacific context of the 7th Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD) and High-level Political Forum (HLPF). The workshop will assist countries to implement solutions and address gaps and challenges that they have themselves identified in their VNRs. It also seeks to support them in building coherent policies for sustainable development, integrating good practices, lessons learned and recommendations, including from peer learning from other countries, identified during the HLPF and VNR process.

To achieve this, the meeting will:

1. Discuss where the Pacific stands in the 5-year implementation of the SDGs: Perspectives from the regional and global fora for sustainable development;
2. Share national experiences in the SDGs implementation: voluntary national reviews, progresses and challenges;
3. Develop collective recommendations for accelerating progress towards SDGs;
4. Build the capacity of countries in the Pacific region to implement key outcomes of the VNRs.

The meeting will provide an opportunity to identify additional capacity building needs, including training materials and tools i.e. on stakeholder engagement, SDG interlinkages and policy coherence as well as utilising the outcome of Follow-up and Review processes.

Intended Participants

By invitation and in their individual expert capacity:

1. Representatives from ESCAP member States in the Pacific responsible for implementing development in government in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
2. National Planning and VNR focal points
3. Representatives of UN, regional and sub-regional organizations
4. Private sector and CSO representatives

Organization

The meetings will be conducted in English and all documentation will be in English.

Expected outcome

The outcome of the workshop will inform deliberations at the 7th Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD) to be held in March 2020 through the development a summary of proceedings of the key topics and issues raised by participants, as well as training materials and presentations. These documents will be sent to participants and will also be made available on the ESCAP Website.

TENTATIVE AGENDA

Day 1	Monday 21 October 2019 - Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development
13:30 - 14:00	Registration

14:00 – 14:30	<p>Opening</p> <p><i>Welcome remarks</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Ms. Noumea Simi, Chair of the SDG Task Force of Samoa · Ms. Irena Zubcevic, Chief, Office of Intergovernmental Support and Coordination for Sustainable Development, UN DESA · Mr. Iosefa Maiava, Head, ESCAP Pacific Office
14:30 – 15:00	Coffee Break, Photo Session
15:00 – 16:30	<p>Session 1: Where do we currently stand with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SAMOA Pathway in the Pacific?</p> <p>The aim of the session is to reflect on the current situation of the Pacific in terms of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Background to the APFSD and HLPF: Why are these important for PICs? (ESCAP and DESA) · Overview of progress in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SAMOA Pathway (SPC and PIFS) <p>Format: Plenary presentations and panel discussion.</p>
16:30 – 18:00	<p>Session 2: Regional coherence and support for sustainable development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Pacific Roadmap for Sustainable Development (PRSD) and proposal for a 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent (PIFS) · Outcome of the Climate Summit, Samoa Pathway Mid-Term Review and SDG Summit (ESCAP and DESA) – What next? · Overview of regional reporting – the 1st Quadrennial Pacific Sustainable Development Report and the upcoming Biennial Report to FEMM (PIFS) <p>Format: Panel discussion of UN, PIFS and country representative</p>

Day 2	Tuesday 22 October 2019 – Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development
09:00 -10:00	<p>Session 3 (a): Identifying cross-border challenges in the implementation of the SDGs and unlocking the means of implementation to overcome these challenges</p> <p>The session will identify some of the key cross-border challenges in the implementation of the SDGs and discuss how the means of implementations in the <i>Regional Road Map for Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific</i> can address these challenges. The means of implementation in the Regional Road Map: a) Data and statistics b) Technology c) Finance d) Policy coherence e) North-South, South-South, international and regional partnerships</p>

	<p>Issues to be addressed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change · Leaving no-one behind · Connectivity · Natural resources management <p>Format: Presentations and plenary discussion</p>
10:00 -10:15	Coffee Break
10:15-11:45	<p>Session 3 (b): Identifying cross-border challenges in the implementation of the SDGs and unlocking the means of implementation to overcome these challenges</p> <p>Format: Group work and plenary discussion.</p>
11:45 - 13:00	<p>Session 4: Importance of VNRs for national implementation. How can VNRs advance national implementation: institutions, policy coherence and mainstreaming of SDGs into national development plans, alignment with budget, integrated financial frameworks, data, stakeholder engagement</p> <p>Format: Presentations from DESA, ESCAP and PIFS followed by Q&A</p>
13:00-14:00	Lunch
14:00 – 15:30	<p>Session 5: Leveraging ocean resources for sustainable development in the Pacific</p> <p>This session will examine how ocean resources in the Pacific can be better used to raise financial resources for sustainable development.</p> <p>Format:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Representative from ESCAP provides a short presentation on the opportunities for raising financial resources from oceans in a sustainable way. · Country participants and experts narrow down on particularly relevant sectors. · The 2020 Ocean Conference – What’s in it for SIDS (UNDESA)
15:30 – 15:45	Coffee Break
15:45 – 17:30	<p>Session 6: Pacific perspectives on accelerating progress towards the SDGs</p> <p>This last session will feature an interactive discussion on how to accelerate the way forward, including the process leading to the APFSD and HLPF, and concluding remarks by the organizers.</p> <p>Format: Panel discussion of stakeholder groups.</p>
23 October – Pacific SIDS VNR Workshop	
09:00 – 09:15	<p>Aims and objectives for the VNR workshop sessions</p> <p>Format: Presentation by DESA</p>

<p>09:15 – 10:45</p>	<p>Session 1: VNR as an implementation tool</p> <p>Session that aims to kick-off the peer learning and contribute to building a common understanding of the main functions of the VNR as a tool for implementation.</p> <p>Guiding questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is the ultimate goal of a voluntary national review? (Why VNRs) 2. What areas of implementation have proved most challenging? What are the main capacity gaps countries have identified? 3. What happens after the review process and presentation at the HLPF? (the Post-VNR phase) <p><i>Comment</i> - Friedrich Soltau, UN DESA (10 mins.)</p> <p>Small group discuss guiding questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What steps have been taken to follow-up on the VNR? 2. What areas of implementation have proved most challenging? What are the main capacity gaps countries have identified? 3. What were the main benefits derived from the VNR process? <p>Q&A</p>
<p>10:45 - 11:00</p>	<p>Coffee break</p>
<p>11:00 – 13:00</p>	<p>Session 2: Pursuing an Integrated Sustainable Development Agenda in the Pacific</p> <p>Addressing the Implementation Gap: Brief presentations on experiences in translating the SAMOA Pathway and the 2030 Agenda into national policy frameworks and their implementation frameworks</p> <p><i>Panel discussion</i></p> <p><i>Guiding questions:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What has been the experience with integrating the SDGs and the SAMOA Pathway into national development plans and other policy frameworks? 2. How do we address implementation? What are some of the key lessons and recommendations from the Samoa Pathway review? 3. How can we resource and monitor implementation plans? <p>Discussion</p>
<p>13:00 – 14:00</p>	<p>Lunch break</p>
<p>14:00 – 14:30</p>	<p>Session 3: Thematic discussions in parallel WGs</p> <p>Two topics are covered in smaller groups, with introductory presentations in plenary.</p> <p>Stakeholder engagement - Kick-off presentation by Friedrich Soltau, UN DESA</p> <p>Data and statistics - Kick-off presentation by Christopher Ryan, ESCAP</p>

14:30 – 15:30	WG A: Stakeholder engagement (DESA) Facilitated exchange of experiences Outcome: Two critical challenges, plus 2-3 good practices	WG B: Data and statistics (ESCAP) Facilitated exchange of experiences Outcome: Two critical challenges, plus 2-3 good practices
15:30 16:00	Break	
16:00 – 16:30	Session 4: Thematic discussions in parallel WGs Two topics are covered in smaller groups, with introductory presentations in plenary. Integrated planning and financing - Kick-off presentation by Sanjesh Naidu, ESCAP Leaving No One Behind - Kick-off presentation by Irena Zubcevic, DESA	
16:30 – 17:30	WG C: Integrated planning and financing (ESCAP) Facilitated exchange of experiences Outcome: Two critical challenges, plus 2-3 good practices	WG D: Leaving no one behind (DESA/Sub-regional organization) Facilitated exchange of experiences Outcome: Two critical challenges, plus 2-3 good practices
24 October - Pacific SIDS VNR Workshop		
09:00– 10:00	Feedback and discussion WGs share good practices or solutions related to their topics. Q&A	
10:00 – 11:00	Cross-cutting challenges – sharing of best practises Focus Group discussion <i>Guiding questions:</i> 1. How to obtain the buy-in across different government entities and overcoming geographic isolation? 2. What mechanisms have worked for addressing interlinkages in SDG implementation? 3. How to achieve policy coherence and identify synergies and tradeoffs? 4. How to engage local authorities in SDG implementation? 5. What are good practices in promoting the participation of parliamentarians, as well as other institutions promoting accountability, such as supreme audit institutions?	
11:00 – 11:30	Coffee break	
11:30 – 12:30	Solutions session - good practices for enhancing implementation of the Agenda <i>Guiding questions:</i> 1. What can be done to scale up peer learning for implementation of the 2030 Agenda? 2. What can be done to build on the lessons learned during the VNRs? 3. What kinds of partnerships are facilitating capacity development activities? 4. What are good practices for strengthening M&E and reporting frameworks? 5. How can we make national planning and budgeting systems more effective for implementing the national and 2030 Development Agenda?	

12:30– 13:30	Lunch
13:30 – 15:00	<p>Preparing the VNR and presentations at the HLPF Ms. Irena Zubcevic, Chief, Office of Intergovernmental Support and Coordination for Sustainable Development, UN DESA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lessons learned from VNRs • Secretary-General’s voluntary guidelines for VNRs and how to best utilize them • Handbook for preparations of VNRs and how it can be of assistance • VNR preparation check list • Stakeholder consultation • Best ways how to build partnerships and enhance peer learning for the preparation of a VNR report • What type of presentations can be envisaged? <p>Q & A</p>
15:00 – 15:30	Coffee break
15:30 – 16:30	<p>Lessons and common practices from Pacific SIDS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mini-panel sharing lessons on leveraging existing national planning and institutional systems, statistics and data in place to support VNR process and reporting
17:00 – 18:00	UN Day Side Event

25 October	
9:00 – 11:00	<p>Session on Work Plans – Practical steps to get started</p> <p>Main elements of a workplan for preparing a VNR report and elements in the report</p> <p>Working in working groups pairing those countries who have already submitted a VNR report with those who have not, assisted by DESA and ESCAP</p>
11:00 – 11:30	Break
11:30 – 12:30	<p>Next steps and follow-up to the workshop</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expectations from volunteering countries • Support needed
12:30 – 13:30	Lunch