# VNR Lab #2

## Peer Learning in Action – Strengthening Voluntary National Reviews through Collaboration

**Date and time:** Friday July 18 2025, 9:00-10:00 am NY time (EST)

**Venue:** United Nations Headquarters, Room 1522/1523

**Background:**

This VNR lab, hosted by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) will showcase innovative peer learning modalities that support countries in preparing for and following up on their Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs).

Countries have made substantial progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda since their adoption in 2015. As there is still much work to be done to close remaining gaps in the next five years, this is an optimal moment to turn towards each other for guidance and inspiration. This session will feature the twinning programme—a regional initiative that pairs countries to exchange experiences, strengthen institutional capacities, and foster sustained engagement beyond the VNR presentation and other peer learning modalities. Through interactive dialogue, the Lab will highlight practical tools, success factors, and lessons learned from diverse peer learning approaches in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond, with a focus on building ownership and continuity in SDG implementation.

**Objectives**

- Increase engagement in and share best practices for peer learning modalities
- Serve as a platform for networking among countries that are presenting their VNRs in 2025 or preparing for their VNRs in 2026

**Tentative Agenda for VNR Lab**

| Time | Activity |
|---|---|
| **9:00-9:05** | Welcome and Overview- Juliet Braslow, ESCAP |
| **9:05-9:40** | Panel discussion<br>• Malaysia- Mr. Asfaazam Kasban, Director of the National SDG Centre<br>• Philippines- Undersecretary Rosemarie Edillon, Department of Economy, Planning, and Development (DEPDev)<br>• Bhutan- Mr. Sangay Phuntsho, Chief Planning Officer, Office of the Cabinet Affairs and Strategic Coordination, Cabinet Secretariat<br>• Germany- Mr. Ulrich Nicklas, Head of Division United Nations, 2030 Agenda, Developing Countries and Emerging Economies; Environmental Aspects of International Climate and Energy Policy, Federal Ministry for the Environment, Climate Action Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety<br>• Thailand- Ms. Pornrawe Poenateetai, First Secretary, Department of International Organizations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs<br>• Seychelles- Mr. Julius Joubert, Senior Economist, National Planning Department, Ministry of Finance National Planning, and Trade<br>• Asian Development Bank- Ms. Rachana Shrestha, Senior Public Sector Specialist |
| **9:40-9:55** | Speed Twinning exercise for smaller group, deeper discussions and learning |
| **9:55-10:00** | Closing- ESCAP |