

South and South-West Asia 2024 Voluntary National Reviews Clinic

An Associated Event of the Seventh South and South-West Asia
Subregional Forum on the Sustainable Development Goals

Monday 9 October 2023, 09:00-15:00
Sur Sudha Hall, The Soaltee Kathmandu

CONCEPT NOTE

Context

The voluntary national review (VNR) is a process through which countries assess and present national progress made in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). As part of its follow-up and review mechanisms, the 2030 Agenda encourages member States to "*conduct regular and inclusive reviews of progress at the national and sub-national levels, which are country-led and country-driven*".

National reviews serve as a basis for the regular global reviews by the High-level Political Forum (HLPF) held every year in July in New York. The VNR aims to facilitate the sharing of experiences, including successes, challenges and lessons learned, with a view to accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The VNR also seeks to strengthen policies and institutions of governments and to mobilize multistakeholder support and partnerships for SDG acceleration. VNRs are not only a reporting mechanism to periodically take stock, but also a tool to continuously reflect and improve on the SDG implementation process itself.

Achieving the SDGs requires multistakeholder efforts and VNRs provide a great opportunity to lead and mobilize support for an open, transparent, participatory, and multistakeholder approach to SDG implementation. Multistakeholder engagement for the VNRs promotes ownership and raises public knowledge of national initiatives to achieve the SDGs. By forging new partnerships, it increases the accessibility of resources like funding, technical know-how, analytical tools, and data. Furthermore, it makes VNRs more cohesive and comprehensive, promoting integrated approaches to sustainable development.

All countries in South and South-West Asia (SSWA)¹ have completed and reported two VNRs, whereas Nepal is preparing their third report to be presented in 2024. While reporting on the

¹ The Islamic Republic of Iran has withdrawn from the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development



specific context of each country, the VNR also outline challenges, many of which are similar across countries, especially within the same region.

Objectives

This VNR Clinic aims to facilitate the exchange of good practices in preparing VNRs and present ESCAP's support for the VNR process. It will provide an opportunity to discuss the role of VNRs as enablers for multistakeholder partnerships and improve policy frameworks to accelerate SDG implementation.

The clinic seeks to:

- Offer a space to discuss VNR preparation.
- Foster capacity building and peer learning by providing advice on VNR preparation processes and key challenges encountered in 2nd and 3rd VNRs.
- Provide an overview of ESCAP's VNR support and tools.
- Promote south-south cooperation on the VNRs and SDG acceleration.

Participants

Participation is by invitation only. The workshop will gather a broad range of stakeholders involved in VNR processes, such as:

- Government officials engaged in various aspects of implementing and monitoring the SDGs.
- Representatives of civil society organizations active in SDG advocacy and implementation, including those representing or working with marginalized and vulnerable groups.
- Representatives of the private sector.
- Experts from think tanks and academia.
- Other stakeholders involved in VNR processes at the national, local, sub-regional and regional levels.

Tentative Agenda

Monday, 9 October 2023

Time	Session
08:30 – 09:00	Registration and welcome tea/coffee
09:00 – 09:10	Opening remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Masters of Ceremony: Mr. Riccardo Mesiano, Sustainable Development Officer, ESCAP ▪ Opening remarks: Ms. Hannaa Singer-Hamdy, Resident Coordinator for Nepal
09:00 – 10:15	Session 1: Exploring the voluntary national review process and experiences from the region <i>This session will introduce elements the key elements of the VNR process, highlighting the role of VNRs as tools for SDG acceleration. It will also provide space for countries to share their experiences with VNRs.</i>

Time	Session
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ms. Sara Libera Zanetti, 2030 Agenda and VNR Specialist, ESCAP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ <i>Introduction to the event, tour de table and participants' experience with VNRs.</i> ➢ <i>Overview of VNR timeline & process, and best practices from the SSWA region.</i> ➢ <i>Reflections on the role of VNRs in SDG acceleration.</i> ▪ Moderator: Mr. Riccardo Mesiano, Sustainable Development Officer, ESCAP ▪ Country experiences with 2nd and 3rd VNR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Ms. Ishita Aggarwal, SDG Consultant, NITI Aayog, India ➢ Ms. Mahjabeen Cheema, Deputy Chief, SDGs Section, Ministry of Planning Development and Special Initiatives, Pakistan ➢ Mr. Aman Khaleel, Senior Planning Analyst, National Planning Division, National Planning Department, Maldives ➢ Ms. Kartika Yadav, Planning Officer, Sustainable Development and International Relations Sections, Nepal <p>Open discussion (15 minutes)</p>
10:15 – 10:30	Group photo and networking break
10:30– 12.00	<p>Session 2: Using the VNR to strengthen evidence-based policy on sustainable development and targeting those left behind</p> <p><i>This session will discuss approaches and methodologies to integrate SDG progress assessments as well as analysis on the most vulnerable groups and into VNR processes. It will also present good practices at country level and will elaborate on how VNRs can promote better use of evidence in policy making, particularly in relation to targeting inequalities and those being left behind.</i></p> <p>Moderator: Ms. Usha Mishra, Chief of Governance, Policy and Evidence, UNICEF</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mr. Arman Bidarbakht Nia, Statistician, ESCAP (15 minutes) remote connection <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ <i>SDG Progress Assessment: using data for evidence-based analysis for VNR.</i> ▪ Country experiences of conducting/utilizing an SDG Progress Assessment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Ms. Deepa Nilanthy Liyange, Additional Secretary to the Prime Minister, Prime Minister's Office, Sri Lanka ➢ Mr. Manoj Aathpahariya, Programme Coordinator (Indigenous Navigator) – LAHURNIP, Nepal ▪ Mr. Selahattin Selsah Pasali, Social Affairs Officer, ESCAP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ <i>Integrating Leaving No-One Behind analysis in the VNR.</i> ▪ Country experience of conducting/utilizing an LNOB analysis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Ms. Avashree Shakya, National Volunteer (Youth Engagement Coordinator), VSO Nepal <p>Open discussion (15 minutes)</p>
12:00 – 13:30	Lunch break
13:30 – 14:45	Session 3: Multistakeholder approaches for VNRs to promote SDG acceleration

Time	Session
	<p><i>This session will discuss the importance of promoting multistakeholder participation in the VNRs, presenting best practices from the region with stakeholder engagement, including through ESCAP's VNR Twinning Programme and other collaborative initiatives.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Moderator: Mr. Riccardo Mesiano, Sustainable Development Officer, ESCAP ➤ Stakeholder experiences with engagement in VNR processes ➤ Ms. Jyotsna Mohan, Regional Coordinator, Asia Development Alliance ➤ Mr. Zia ur Rehman, Chief Executive, AwazCDS-Pakistan ➤ Mr. Saroj KC, Policy and Advocacy Manager, Save the Children, Nepal ➤ Ms. Fatimath Zimna, General Secretary, Maldives Trade Union Congress ➤ remote connection ➤ Mr. Zakir Hossain, Chief Executive, Nagorik Uddyog, Bangladesh <p>Open discussion (15 minutes)</p>
14:45 – 15:00	<p>Wrap-up and vote of thanks: Key take aways</p> <p><i>This session will summarise key points emerged during the discussions and will present future activities on Follow-up and Review.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mr. Riccardo Mesiano, Sustainable Development Officer, ESCAP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>Forthcoming global VNR workshops and APFSD.</i> ➤ <i>Connecting countries for peer learning.</i> ➤ <i>Resources and support available.</i>
15:00 – 15:20	Afternoon tea/ coffee

Further Information

For more information on **ESCAP's VNR support** please visit: <https://www.unescap.org/2030-agenda/voluntary-national-reviews>

All questions regarding the workshop can be directed to escap-vnr@un.org with copy to sswa.escap@un.org

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