Preparing the VNR and presentations at the HLPF

Irena Zubcevic, Chief, Intergovernmental Policy and Review Branch, Office of Intergovernmental Support and Coordination for Sustainable Development, UN DESA
(zubcevic@un.org)
Apia, 25 October 2019
Where we are globally

### VNR Presentations by Region Including 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Number of Countries</th>
<th>Presented VNR or Will in 2020</th>
<th>Not Presented VNR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia-Pacific</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America and Caribbean</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WEOG and Other States</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern European Group</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## VNRS IN THE PACIFIC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pacific – Who presented or will present their VNRS (12)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>2016</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Samoa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Kiribati</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2019</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Fiji</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Nauru</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Palau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Timor-Leste</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Tonga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Vanuatu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2020</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Micronesia (Federated States of)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Papua New Guinea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Solomon Islands (also LDC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2021</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Marshall Islands</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pacific – Not yet presented or expressed a wish to present a VNR (3)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Cook Islands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Niue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Tuvalu (also LDC)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
WHY UNDERTAKE A VNR?

• Changes mindsets
• Identifies and acts on priorities
• Maps gaps and defines challenges
• Engages all stakeholders
• Draws lessons and provides critical reflections on the process:
  • increased level of meaningful consultations
  • whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach
  • forging of partnerships

The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results
Lessons learned from 2019 VNR countries

“If countries knew what their aim was in conducting a VNR, it could positively influence their presentation.”

"1. Start the process early.
2. Make a work plan that will include consultations with stakeholders.
3. Include your country's Mission to the UN at every stage, using Skype, WhatsApp, Facetime, where possible.
4. Make institutional arrangements that include a policy guidance 'tier' AND a technical advisory 'tier.' If there are administrative regions or many islands make up your country, ensure that the institutional arrangements include the regional governments.
5. Determine drafting arrangements early - who will draft what? By when?
6. Establish early arrangements for the (means of) inclusion of stakeholders. Decide whether the NGO sector will be encouraged to produce a 'shadow' report.
7. Know your presenting team well ahead of time, if possible.
8. Make your presentation interesting and not 'cookie-cutter.'"
Support to VNR Process

**Preparatory process**

UN DESA in cooperation with UN country teams, regional commissions and regional and subregional organizations as appropriate conducts a preparatory process for VNR countries through:

- 3 global workshops
- Regional and subregional workshops in UN regions
- Individual assistance upon request from countries
- Preparation of synthesis report of VNR reports each year
- SG voluntary common reporting guidelines
- Synthesis of main messages from VNR reports
- Handbook on preparation for VNRs updated each year
**Benefits from preparatory process**

- Familiarization with VNR process, peer learning and capacity building
- Sharing of lessons learned, best practices and experiences from countries who have already presented their VNRs
- Regional and subregional specificities discussed among VNR countries and benefits and challenges connected to them

**Challenges from preparatory process**

- Insufficient time and resources for more robust capacity building
- Better coordinated support by the UN system
- Lack of comparability among reports due to different approaches and methods used
Timeline for 2020 VNRs

Timeline for 2020 Voluntary National Reviews

GLOBAL PREP I
19-20 Nov 2019 | Oslo

GLOBAL PREP. II
Feb 2020 | TBC

ATELIER MONDIAL DE PREP. III
12 July 2020 | New York

REGIONAL PREP WORKSHOPS
February - April 2020
In collaboration with regional commissions

>> Country Level Activities >>

DEADLINE I
21 April 2020
Submission of main messages

DEADLINE II
12 June 2020
Submission of final reports

2020 VNR PRESENTATIONS

Second-time Presenters:
13 Jul 2020
First-time Presenters:
14-16 Jul 2020
New York
Ministerial Segment HLPF
PRESENTATION AT THE HLPF

Each first-time presenter has 15 minutes for presentation and up to 15 min Q&A

Each second-time presenter has 10 minutes for presentation and up to 10 min Q&A

Format for presentation: individual/panel/interactive

Consider choosing a friend from the Group of friends of VNRs

Each VNR country will have focal point from DESA

Consider presenting and/or participating in VNR Labs

Consider having a side event and also maybe including other presenting countries
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. Initial preparation and organisation | - Send letter to President of ECOSOC to communicate decision to conduct a VNR.  
- Assign responsibility for coordinating and preparing the VNR.  
- Estimate and identify resources required.  
- Consider scope of review.  
- Develop work plan/road map with deliverables aligned to HLPF deadlines (e.g. submission of Main Messages and VNR Report).  
- Map key national actors (e.g. Parliament, line ministries, national statistical office, local government officials, stakeholders).  
- Prepare draft outline of VNR and develop key messages.  
- Assign information- and data-gathering tasks, including drawing on existing national documents and previous VNR reports. |
| 2. Stakeholder Engagement     | - Contact relevant government departments (line ministries) and agencies, setting out basic details, e.g. about the VNR, the information/data requested, and establishment of a focal point.  
- Develop stakeholder engagement plan which identifies key stakeholders, and method of engagement (consider offline and online options).  
- Establish awareness-raising and public outreach component to disseminate avenues for stakeholder engagement in the VNR process, making use of government communication services, social media, etc.  
- Make sure targeted efforts are made to reach groups that are marginalised and at risk of being left behind. |
VNR preparation checklist

| 3. VNR Preparation | □ Review and incorporate material received, including data, other reports and previous VNRs.  
|                     | □ Follow-up with government colleagues/information providers to secure missing material or provide additional analysis.  
|                     | □ Decide on participants for the preparatory global and regional workshops.  
|                     | □ Prepare zero draft, including identifying remaining gaps, together with stakeholders.  
|                     | □ Prepare draft of Main Messages (not more than 700 words) for approval and submission to DESA by **21 April 2020**.  
|                     | □ Carry out internal review of VNR, including quality control, allowing time for resolution of possibly contentious issues.  
|                     | □ Establish comment period and circulate draft to relevant government officials.  
|                     | □ Provide opportunity for stakeholders to comment and integrate comments from all national actors and stakeholders to the greatest extent possible.  
|                     | □ Edit the VNR and arrange for translation into English, if needed/desirable, and design and layout.  
|                     | □ Submit for endorsement and approval if required (for example to the Minister, Prime Minister, Cabinet).  
|                     | □ Transmit electronic copy of the VNR to DESA by **12 June 2020**.  

| 4. HLPF Presentation | □ Fill out questionnaire and return to DESA (deadline will be indicated) for information on HLPF presentation.  
|                       | □ Inform DESA of preferred presentation format (panel / individual), presenter, and composition of delegation.  
|                       | □ Produce visual materials for the VNR presentations. Deadlines for submission of audiovisual materials to DESA will be indicated.  
|                       | □ Select key messages for VNR presentation, with time limit scheduled for that year in mind.  

WHAT could be improved: recommendations bearing in mind voluntary and flexible nature of VNRs

National level

• Strengthening national ownership including through capacity building and whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach and through preparing the VNRs by national team using international assistance when needed

• Linking the VNRs to reporting to other mechanisms and conventions

• Strengthening monitoring and oversight including through parliaments and supreme audit institutions, strengthening cooperation among all branches of government

• Explaining the impacts of strategies and polices on national level implementation of the 2030 Agenda
WHAT could be improved: recommendations bearing in mind voluntary and flexible nature of VNRs

Global level

• Using SG voluntary common reporting guidelines to increase comparability, but also to improve overall quality of reports over time by learning from good practices and reflecting these by updating periodically the guidelines

• Focusing VNR presentation at HLPF on explanation of impact of polices and strategies, lessons learned and peer learning that can be of benefit to all countries

• Strengthening of interactive discussion including through providing more time for Q&A and getting recommendations

• Strengthen the role of HLPF as a platform for peer learning and exchanging of experiences

• Strengthen HLPF to serve as a broker and matchmaker for partnerships in the follow-up after the VNRs through looking at areas where countries need support
Resources

- Voluntary National Review Database
  https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/vnrs/
- VNR Handbook including SG Voluntary reporting guidelines – 2019 edition [AR] [EN] [FR] [2020 edition coming soon]
Thank you!