



HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Virtual Knowledge Exchange on Approaches and Tools for the 2023 Voluntary National Reviews

Summaries of approaches and tools presented in December 2022



**United
Nations**

Department of
Economic and
Social Affairs



Introduction

Voluntary national reviews (VNRs) are an essential part of the formal follow-up and review architecture of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Presented every year at the United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) during its three-day ministerial segment in July, these reviews are voluntary, state-led, undertaken by both developed and developing countries, and provide a platform for partnerships, including through the participation of major groups and other relevant stakeholders.

In 2023, 41 countries will be presenting voluntary national reviews (VNRs) of their implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the 2023 HLPF. To support those countries, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) organized a virtual "Knowledge Exchange" on 13 December 2022. The Knowledge Exchange was an online addition to the first global workshop for 2023 VNR countries which was held in Turin from 5 to 6 December 2022.

The annual Knowledge Exchange is an opportunity for UN entities and other organizations to engage directly with the 2023 VNR countries to share tools, approaches and methodologies that can support VNR preparations. These entities provided brief presentations of how they can assist those countries. A written background on the various tools is presented in this booklet, together with links and contacts.

The presentations were into four sessions, organized by broad topic. This booklet will follow the order of the presentations made at the Knowledge Exchange. It is hoped that the Knowledge Exchange, and this booklet, will be considered useful to those countries presenting their VNR reports at the 2023 HLPF.

For more details on the HLPF, please visit: hlpf.un.org/2023.

A database of over 300 VNR reports presented at the HLPF since 2016 is available from this link: hlpf.un.org/countries

On the cover: View of the Dag Hammarskjöld Library. Mural by Fritz Glarner. © [UN Photo](https://www.un.org/photo).



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United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP)

The United Nations Economic and Social Commission (ESCAP) provides support to VNR-presenting countries both in VNR formulation (e.g., assessing data on [SDG progress](#) and investment needs, [inequality](#), social protection, [energy](#) planning and sustainable development) and VNR preparation (developing VNR roadmaps, inception workshops, mapping out stakeholder engagement, and reviewing drafts).

Approach/Tool: ESCAP Twinning Programme

ESCAP's flagship [Twinning Programme](#) also connects two or more VNR countries in the region that are presenting their VNR in the same year. The aim of the Twinning Programme is to provide an opportunity for 'live-learning' among VNR countries in the Asia-Pacific region, build practical and technical knowledge on SDG acceleration, and enhance partnerships and SDG leadership through South-South cooperation. The programme provides a unique opportunity for countries to exchange good practices, lessons learned, and offer peer support. The Twinning Programme involves connecting VNR coordinating bodies, national statistics offices, and stakeholders, and can take the form of study tours, virtual meetings, and peer reviews of VNR drafts and plans.

Links:

<https://www.unescap.org/2030-agenda/voluntary-national-reviews>

<https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/d8files/2022-12/ESCAP-VNR-Twinning-Programme.pdf>

Approach/Tool: E-tutorials on 2nd Generation VNRs

This tutorial provides guidance to governments that are about to start the planning process for their 2nd or 3rd VNR. The e-tutorial can also be taken by civil society organisations, local authorities, and other stakeholders to help them understand the expectations for 2nd VNRs and how they can engage with the VNR process

Link: [ESCAP E-learning Platform \(unescap.org\)](https://www.unescap.org/e-learning)

Approach/Tool: 2nd VNR Guidance tool

The purpose of this tool is to provide practical advice and concrete tips to countries to develop a 2nd (or 3rd) generation VNR. The objective is to help countries to connect their 1st and 2nd VNR to ensure that there is continuity between the reports. The tool includes practical checklists, diagrams, and best practices to help countries reflect on the process for their 1st VNR and identify key areas for improvement.

Link: [Voluntary National Reviews \(VNRs\) : a practical guidance tool for 2nd VNRs | ESCAP \(unescap.org\)](https://www.unescap.org/vnr-guidance)

Approach/Tool: VNR Policy Briefs

ESCAP has developed two VNR policy briefs to provide policy makers with practical tools and ideas to address common challenges in the VNR process. VNR Brief #1, "*Putting the voluntary national review in action: developing practical next steps and planning the post-VNR period*" aims to provide guidance on how to define practical next steps and policy conclusions in the VNR to keep up the momentum and ensure follow-up of VNR commitments.

VNR Brief #2, “Stakeholder engagement in voluntary national reviews: feedback and follow-up” provides guidance on utilizing feedback and innovative forms of stakeholder engagement to ensure that the VNR is based on inputs from all parts of society and government.

Links:

[Putting the voluntary national review in action : developing practical next steps and planning the post-VNR period | ESCAP \(unescap.org\)](#)

[Stakeholder engagement in voluntary national reviews : feedback and follow-up | ESCAP \(unescap.org\)](#)

Approach/Tool: Peer-learning through the Asia-Pacific Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD)

The 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, while serving as a regional preparatory meeting to the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF). The Forum features representatives from governments, civil society, youth groups and other stakeholders at both ministerial and technical levels. Side events, workshops and associated events on VNRs are featured as well as high-level events during the forum focusing on the reviews. All of this aims to enable peer-learning, sharing of best practices, addressing challenges and other assistance for the ongoing VNRs.

Link: <https://www.unescap.org/events/apfsd10>

Approach/Tool: National SDG Tracker

The National SDG Tracker is an online interactive tool on the Asia-Pacific SDG Gateway, which provides every country with its SDG data available on the global database and enables them to generate SDG progress charts. Users can take advantage of the wealth of data already available on the Asia-Pacific SDG Gateway, customize indicator sets (add proxy indicators and/or drop indicators), update data and set national targets. The progress assessment is done at three levels: goal, target and indicator. The National SDG Tracker also encourages the use of disaggregated data, so no one is left behind. Users have ownership over data and results. They can choose to download and publish them on their preferred platform and reports or use the raw data to generate their own visualizations.

Link: <https://data.unescap.org/stories/national-sdg-tracker>

Approach/Tool: Social Protection Simulator (SPOT)

The ESCAP Social Protection Simulator estimates the impact of introducing social protection schemes on poverty, inequality and consumption. The impact can be estimated for rural and urban households, as well as for different income groups and family configurations. It also computes the cost of simulated programmes, providing different illustrative options to expand fiscal space for social protection. Users can design social protection schemes in a country by setting parameters related to eligibility criteria, coverage levels and benefit amounts. The simulator allows the user to analyze one scheme at a time or to combine different schemes and build a customized social protection package. In addition to simulating the impact in one country, users can compare social protection schemes of their choice within and across different countries.

Link: <https://spot.unescap.org/simulator>

Approach/Tool: National Expert SDG Tool for Energy Planning (NEXSTEP)

The National Expert SDG Tool for Energy Planning supports the development of national SDG7 roadmaps, aligning national energy plans with SDG7 and NDCs and to develop national energy transition pathways. The methodology includes three steps: (i) energy modelling with

estimate share of energy resources; (ii) economic analysis to identify feasible options, and; (iii) scenario analysis of national policies and implementation.

Link: <https://nextstepenergy.org/landing>

Approach/Tool: Leaving No One Behind Tool

This platform is a unique tool to identify the groups that have fallen the furthest behind. It provides the data essential to design truly inclusive development policies, monitors gaps and inequality in SDG achievements, generates granular insights by exploring the situation of individuals and households at country and provincial levels, and debunks preconceptions about who lacks access to basic opportunities by using most recent evidence from comparable household surveys. The tool is helpful to understand how different circumstances interact to create unequal access to basic opportunities and provides a sound basis for inclusive policy development to increase opportunity across the Asia-Pacific region.

Link: <https://lnob.unescap.org/>

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United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA)

Approach/tool: Voluntary Local Review Guidelines

ECA has developed a set of African Regional VLR Guidelines and Template, as requested by member States and based directly on the unique SDG localization experiences in Africa, informed by the region's five first VLRs. The guidelines and template also assist member States in linking data gathering and analysis, stakeholder engagement and feedback with VNR processes.

Link: <https://www.uneca.org/voluntary-local-reviews-in-africa/documents>

Approach/tool: Integrated Planning and Reporting Toolkit (IPRT)

The IPRT responds to the needs of African countries to simultaneously adopt and integrate both the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063 into their national development. It enables them to identify gaps in implementation, identify means to accelerate progress towards sustainable development, and to report their progress in a harmonized way. Information is available through ECA's harmonized SDG Database.

Links:

<https://iprt.uneca.org/>

<https://iprt.uneca.org/sdgs/progress/eca/assessment>

Approach/tool: Peer-learning through the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (ARFSD)

The ARFSD is held every February/March and features thousands of participants from across Africa, representing governments, civil society, youth groups and other stakeholders at both ministerial and technical levels. A workshop on VNRs and VLRs precedes the forum, with high-level events during the forum focusing on the reviews as well. All of this aims to enable peer-learning, sharing of best practices, addressing of challenges and other assistance for the ongoing VNRs.

Link: <https://www.uneca.org/events/ninth-session-of-the-africa-regional-forum-on-sustainable-development/ninth-session-of-the>

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United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (UNECLAC)

Approach/tool: The Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development

Since 2017, the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development is convened annually under the auspices of ECLAC as a multi-stakeholder platform for debate, peer learning and multisectoral analysis that reviews progress made towards the SDGs and discusses priority topics for sustainable development. The Forum is led by the States of Latin America and the Caribbean and open to representatives of civil society, academia, the private sector as well as other stakeholders from the region. It further involves the subsidiary bodies of ECLAC, development banks, other UN agencies and regional actors. The Forum provides peer learning opportunities, the exchange of good practices and the discussion of common goals and seeks to encourage cooperation with regional and sub-regional organizations to guide an inclusive regional process towards sustainable development. The sixth meeting of the Forum will take place from 24 to 28 April 2023 at ECLAC's Headquarters in Santiago de Chile. At the Forum, the annual report on regional SDG progress and challenges will be presented as an important resource document and ECLAC together with DESA will organize a technical workshop for all LAC countries presenting their VNRs in 2023.

Links to past editions:

<https://foroalc2030.cepal.org/2022/en>

<https://www.cepal.org/en/events/regional-workshop-latin-american-and-caribbean-countries-presenting-their-voluntary-1>

<https://foroalc2030.cepal.org/2022/en/documents/decade-action-change-era>

Approach/tool: The Community of Practice on the Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) of the Latin American and Caribbean countries

The Community of Practice on the Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) of the Latin American and Caribbean countries was established by ECLAC in 2019 and has become an important regional platform for monthly peer-to-peer learning, collaboration and exchange of experiences, knowledge and best practices on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the elaboration of the VNR process. It includes government officials, professionals, researchers and technical experts as well as representatives of ECLAC and the rest of the UN system, including RCOs, and occasionally invites representatives of youth, civil society, the private sector, academia, local authorities, and other stakeholders. Since December 2019, 50 meetings were held at the technical level, both in English and Spanish, tailored to the demands from member States, addressing diverse topics, including the impacts of COVID-19, climate change, data and statistics, meaningful stakeholder engagement, financing for development, localization of the SDGs, among others.

Link: <https://www.cepal.org/en/topics/2030-agenda-sustainable-development/eclac-community-practice-voluntary-national-reviews>

Approach/tool: The 2030 Agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean - The Regional Knowledge Management Platform

The Regional Knowledge Management Platform for the 2030 Agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean, also known as the SDG Gateway, was developed by the ECLAC and the regional office of UNDP, in conjunction with the funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the UN

system in the region. The online hub serves as a meeting and reference point for all information related to the SDGs at the regional level and has two complementary components: One space for general information and content on the 2030 Agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean that gathers information on activities, news, publications and information resources, VNRs and institutional arrangements, and another space dedicated to statistical follow-up and monitoring of the progress made with regard to the SDG indicators, which contains information on institutional aspects of national statistical systems, indicator frameworks, databases, statistical profiles and links to third party entities related to the 2030 Agenda at the global, regional and national levels.

Link: <https://agenda2030lac.org/en>

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United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UNESCWA)

Approach/tool: Handbook on Mainstreaming Gender Equality in Voluntary National Reviews

This ESCWA handbook supports stakeholders in mainstreaming gender equality and women's rights in VNRs, by providing suggestions on how to mainstream gender concerns during the preparatory phase for VNRs, as well as during the discussion on progress made in implementing the SDGs and relevant means of implementation. A section of the Handbook is dedicated to SDG indicators in the Arab region from a gender perspective. The Handbook was produced in the form of an e-course accessible through ESCWA's e-learning platform.

Approach/tool: Manual for Monitoring Food Security in the Arab Region

A 24-indicator framework is proposed by ESCWA, AOAD and FAO to monitor food security in the Arab Region, taking into consideration regional specificities and alignment with the SDGs. The framework is intended to highlight national strength, weakness and priorities for interventions under the four pillars defining food security (access, availability, utilization, and sustainability). The Manual contains a detailed description of each of the indicators and its computation method. An e-course on applying the framework in the context of VNRs is forthcoming.

Links:

<https://www.unescwa.org/publications/guidelines-mainstreaming-gender-equality-voluntary-national-reviews>

<https://www.unescwa.org/publications/manual-monitoring-food-security-arab-region>

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Committee for Development Policy (CDP)

Approach/tool: Integrated approach to leaving no one behind

The Committee for Development Policy (CDP) has conducted analyses of the VNR reports since 2017. The following findings could contribute to making the VNRs a more effective tool in advancing the implementation of the 2030 Agenda:

- Leaving no one behind: describing strategies to implement the pledge to leave no one behind and for "reaching the furthest behind first" and reflecting on practices and policies that may be pushing certain groups of people even further behind are fundamental for the VNRs to be useful in the advancement of the 2030 Agenda. In many previous VNRs, when reference is made to strategies to leave no one behind, countries focus on social protection or policies directed at specific groups. This is important, but it is also imperative to embed the objectives of leaving no one behind and reaching the furthest behind first in macroeconomic, technology and productive sector policies and strategies.
- Evidence-based reporting and inclusive review processes: VNRs will be more effective as policy instruments if they are based on inclusive national and subnational processes; and if reports are evidence- and data-based and include concrete actions that have been undertaken and lessons that have been learned and can be shared with other countries, including on how to harness synergies and address trade-offs in policy objectives.

Links:

<https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/voluntarynational-reviews.html>

<https://cdp.un.org>

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Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI)

Approach/tool: SDG Synergies Tool

SDG Synergies is a tool and method that gives an integrated and systemic view to SDG implementation and reporting. It has been developed by researchers at SEI, in partnership with governments and others, to support more robust and effective implementation strategies through a better understanding of how the SDGs work together.

The tool helps you record, visualize and analyse how progress on the SDGs interacts in a given context. Following a participatory process with key stakeholders and their expert assessments, the SDG Synergies tool uses network analysis to reveal patterns and relationships in clear visual outputs. These outputs give overview of where critical trade-offs and synergies exist; how each target influences and is influenced by all the others; which targets are most catalytic for progress, and which targets will not be supported by progress in other targets. This offers decision- and policy-makers valuable information for working systematically with synergies and trade-offs, and identify priorities and action that can drive progress across the whole 2030 Agenda.

As a practical decision-support tool, SDG Synergies carefully balances the complexity of interactions with comprehensibility. It is transparent, user-friendly and adaptable to various contexts and level of detail. It is available online, open access and free to use. SDG Synergies has been used by national and regional governments around the world. It supported Sweden's VNR 2021, and Colombia's VNR2021 also references the approach.

Link: <https://www.sdgsynergies.org>

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German Council for Sustainable Development (RNE)

Approach/tool: Applying the six areas of transformation – an example from Germany

The German Council for Sustainable Development has been invited to get engaged in six transformation teams of the German government to develop pathways for integrated implementation of the 2030 Agenda in Germany. The global entry-points from the GSDR 2019 have been adjusted to the German context (see page 13 of the [German Voluntary National Review, VNR 2021](#)) and the transformation teams work on the following six themes: (1) Food systems, (2) Pollution free environment (3) Human well-being (4) energy transition and climate change, (5) circular economy and (6) sustainable building and mobility. International action and engagement is a cross-cutting lever and a seventh transformation team.

Multi-stakeholder bodies such as the long-term institution [German Council for Sustainable Development](#) or the ad-hoc and temporal commissions ([the Commission on the Future of Agriculture](#) or [the Commission on Growth, Structural Change and Employment](#) to phase out coal in Germany) are mechanisms and instruments to negotiate conflicting interests towards a societal acceptable transformation pathway.

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UN Women

Approach/tool: Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals: The Gender Snapshot 2022

The annual report presents the latest evidence on gender equality across all 17 goals, calling out the long road ahead to achieve gender equality. It emphasizes the interlinkages among the goals, the pivotal force gender equality plays in driving progress across the SDGs, and women and girls' central role in leading the way forward. The latest edition of the report shows that the world is not on track to achieve gender equality by 2030. COVID-19 and the backlash against women's sexual and reproductive health and rights are further diminishing the outlook for gender equality. Violence against women remains high; global health, climate and humanitarian crises have further increased risks of violence, especially for the most vulnerable women and girls; and women feel more unsafe than they did before the pandemic. Women's representation in positions of power and decision-making remains below parity. Only 47 per cent of data required to track progress on SDG 5 are currently available, rendering women and girls effectively invisible. Nearly halfway to the 2030 endpoint for the SDGs, the time to act and invest in women and girls is now. Included in the report is a tool to track progress on SDG 5 globally, regionally and across countries.

Link: https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2022-09/Progress-on-the-sustainable-development-goals-the-gender-snapshot-2022-en_0.pdf

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Save the Children

Approach/tool: GRID - Child Inequality Tracker

Save the Children's Child Inequality Tracker, GRID, is a free, online resource that helps governments, development partners, and civil society identify groups that are being left behind, monitor progress on the pledge to Leave No One Behind and build public and political understanding about the importance of equitable progress in SDG implementation. The database shows inequalities in selected children's well-being indicators across education, health and child protection, including more than 400 household surveys for more than 100 mostly low and middle-income countries. GRID offers a variety of tools that provide a visual and interactive representation of the inequalities that persist between groups of children across key SDG indicators that can be used by governments in their VNRs. The tools are available in English, French and Spanish.

Links:

<https://www.savethechildren.net/>

<https://www.savethechildren.net/grid>

https://www.savethechildren.net/sites/www.savethechildren.net/files/grid_guide_md.pdf

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Major Groups and other Stakeholders (MGoS) - VNR Task Group

The Major Groups & Other Stakeholders VNR Task Group provides support to national stakeholder groups to participate in the VNR process. We aim to strengthen the capacity of stakeholder groups through a series of webinars and online tools for stakeholders. We aim to link together national groups with an interest to engage in the official VNR process in each country. We will shortly send out a survey to all stakeholder constituencies and we will be happy to share opportunities for dialogue and VNR consultations.

Link: <https://www.mgos.org/parallel-reports/>

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Danish Institute for Human Rights (DIHR)

Approach/tool: DIHR's SDG 4.7 Human Rights Education Monitoring Tool

The Human Rights Education Monitoring Tool was developed by the Danish Institute for Human Rights (DIHR) in close collaboration with the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), seeks to address the data gap and provide an evidence base for the strategic advancement of human rights education element of SDG 4.7. This tool enables National Human Rights Institutions and state parties to monitor the human rights education element of global SDG target 4.7.

The tool facilitates integrated human rights and SDG reporting, where the data generated can be used in reporting on progress in implementing the UN World Programme for Human Rights Education (WPHRE), and the legally binding international treaties that contain provisions on states obligations to implement human rights education, as well as against thematic SDG Indicator 4.7.3, and SDG Indicator 4.7.1 (human right component). The tool has been used by 17 countries so far and has contributed to the data provision for SDG 4.7 in cases where countries were going to the VNR.

Link: <https://sdg47-hre.humanrights.dk/en/node/272>

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United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)

Approach/tool: The Human Rights and Voluntary National Reviews - Operational Common Approach Guidance Note

It is led by OHCHR and UNDP on behalf of the Task Team under the Secretary-General's Call to Action for Human Rights, aims to help Member States maximize synergies between human rights and 2030 Agenda follow-up and review processes. It presents a practical 8-step approach with editable checklists for each step outlining suggested actions to assist Member States in developing their VNRs in a way that integrates human rights throughout the process, while also ensuring inclusive and meaningful participation. Taking the 2030 Agenda article 74(e) as a starting point – follow up and review processes “will be people-centered, gender-sensitive, respect human rights and have a particular focus on the poorest, most vulnerable and those furthest behind”, the guidance note demonstrates ways to use human rights-based approaches to strengthen VNRs and help accelerate SDG implementation that leaves no one behind. It provides links to numerous useful tools, further reference materials, and also highlights several specific country examples and good practices from previous VNRs. The guidance note is available in English and Spanish and French will be available in early 2023.

Link: <https://www.undp.org/publications/human-rights-and-voluntary-national-reviews-operational-common-approach-guidance-note>

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World Vision

Approach/tool: Guidance Note: Ensuring Children are Not Left Behind

The Guidance Note provides specific recommendations to Member States on how to include children's rights, including children's participation in VNR. It follows the general structure of the Secretary-General's updated voluntary common reporting guidelines for VNRs. It also provides examples of good practices from other VNRs from 2017 - 2021.

Approach/tool: Guidance Note for VNRs on Violence against Children

It informs Civil Society Organizations on how to contribute and support Governments in the process of developing their VNRs regarding ending violence against children.

Links:

<https://www.wvi.org/publications/guidance-note-ensuring-children-are-not-left-behind>

<https://www.wvi.org/publications/voluntary-national-reviews-guidance-note-violence-against-children>

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Office of the SR of the SG on Violence Against Children (OSRSG-VAC)

Approach/tool: Seeing the SDGs and VNR through a child protection lens

The VNR process is a key opportunity to mainstream children's rights considering the integrated and interlinked nature of the SDGs that echoes the indivisible and interdependent nature of children's rights. While some SDGs and its targets directly address some forms of violence, the drivers of violence are spread out throughout the SDGs. The essence of the 2030 Agenda – to create peaceful, prosperous, inclusive, and just societies – envisages a world for children where the drivers of violence are proactively reduced, strengthening their protection, and reducing risks. As noted in the 2030 Agenda, children are agents of change and need to be a part of participatory and representative decision-making processes. Achieving the SDGs will help prevent violence against children and provide effective responses. At the same time, social and climate justice, equality, equity, and economic progress across the whole of the 2030 Agenda will be hindered by the damaging and long-term effects of violence against children if the specific SDG targets on violence against children and its drivers are not met.

Links:

[Decade of action to end violence against children | UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence Against Children](#)

[The Violence Prevention Dividend - Why Preventing Violence Against Children Makes Economic Sense | UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence Against Children](#)

[The climate crisis and violence against children | UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence Against Children](#)

[Child Participation | UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence Against Children](#)

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United Nations Volunteers (UNV)

Approach/tool: Integrating volunteer contributions into voluntary national reviews

The United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme works with UN Member States and other stakeholders to support evidence on whole-of-society approaches in their Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs). Globally, millions of active volunteers make economic and social contributions to development processes at scale. From 2016 to 2020, 101 VNRs highlighted the role of volunteers in achieving national priorities and the positive contributions they make to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Countries have highlighted the diversity of volunteer efforts – from extending services to those often left behind, to designing and testing innovations to local problems, to gathering data and providing feedback on SDGs progress.

UNV continues to support countries preparing VNRs in several ways:

- Providing data and evidence on volunteering in the national context (including national statistics on volunteer work where available) at our [Knowledge Portal](#).
- Providing additional information on national statistical data of volunteer work at <https://ilostat.ilo.org/topics/volunteer-work/> and <https://ilostat.ilo.org/resources/concepts-and-definitions/indicator-description-volunteerwork/>
- Convening volunteering stakeholders at national level to collate and validate data and inputs for specific themes or Goals
- Facilitating volunteer-led data collection processes with target groups (e.g. youth or rural communities) to fill data gaps for the VNR processes.

Each year UNV provides an updated guidance note on integrating volunteer contributions to the SDGs. The 2021 version will be available at knowledge.unv.org in December 2020. To see how countries have recognized volunteer contributions to date you can access the Global Synthesis Report on Integrating Volunteering into the 2030 Agenda online.

Links:

<http://knowledge.unv.org/>

<https://ilostat.ilo.org/topics/volunteer-work/>

<https://ilostat.ilo.org/resources/concepts-and-definitions/indicator-description-volunteerwork/>

<https://www.unv.org/>

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World Food Programme (WFP)

Approach/tool: Embedding country-led evaluation in the VNRs

A taskforce established by WFP, UNICEF and UN Women (on behalf of the United Nations Evaluation Group), and EvalPartners have worked towards the promotion of country-led evaluations as a source of evidence to enrich the VNRs. Country-led evaluations are evaluations that are designed, commissioned, managed, and used by governments. Although they are government-managed and -facilitated, they are conducted in an inclusive process that is open to all national stakeholders. External partners such as UNEG could extend technical support to countries to nurture national capacities, mobilize resources, and facilitate the process of conducting a country-led evaluation with the aim of feeding this evidence into the VNR process.

Links:

[Embedding Evaluation in Voluntary National Reviews in Africa: A guide](#)
[Four pathways how country-led evaluation can feed into the VNRs](#)

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Partnership for Maternal, Newborn & Child Health (PMNCH)

Approach/tool: Practical Guidance Resource for Meaningful Adolescent and Youth Engagement

There are 1.8 billion adolescents and youth in the world today– the largest cohort in history. To achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) working for and with adolescents and youth is a critical foundation of change. The Global Consensus Statement on [Meaningful Adolescent and Youth Engagement \(MAYE\)](#) is a joint effort spearheaded by Family Planning 2020 (FP2020), the International Youth Alliance for Family Planning (IYAAP), and PMNCH, launched in 2018 to galvanize local and global health and development communities around a common understanding of how we can ensure that young people are meaningfully engaged and participate in the development and implementation of all policies, programs, and processes that affect them.

To support the implementation and strengthen accountability on MAYE a [Practical Guidance Resource](#) was developed with - support of experts in the field and young people - to provide guidance on how to implement MAYE successfully. It features checklists, provide good practices and concrete examples (case studies) of MAYE, specific constituency-based guidance and additional resources for reference on operationalizing MAYE.

Links:

<https://pmnch.who.int/> <https://pmnch.who.int/resources/publications/m/item/global-consensus-statement-on-meaningful-adolescent-and-youth-engagement>
<https://pmnch.who.int/resources/publications/m/item/practical-guidance-resource-to-operationalize-the-global-consensus-statement-on-meaningful-adolescent-and-youth-engagement-%28maye%29>

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United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

Approach/tool: Population data platform, using census data to monitor the SDGs, SDG costing methodology

Leveraging the census for geographic disaggregation of the SDGs and data layering techniques to reach those furthest behind (LNOB). A crucial tool for strengthening the evidence within the VNRs in the decade of action.

Links:

<https://www.unfpa.org/>

<https://unfpa-covid-unfpapdp.hub.arcgis.com/>

<https://www.unfpa.org/data/demographic-dividend#0>

https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/PSA_Guide_1.pdf

<https://pdp.unfpa.org/intimate-partner-violence/>

<https://www.unfpa.org/census>

<https://unfpa-covid-unfpapdp.hub.arcgis.com/>

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United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

Approach/tools: UNESCO methodology on SDG Indicator 16.10.2 (Public Access to Information)

UNESCO and its Institute for Statistics developed a methodology to help measure and report Indicator 16.10.2. The methodology was endorsed by 39 Member States constituting UNESCO's Intergovernmental Council of International Program for the Development of Communication. The methodology consists of the UNESCO Survey on Public Access to Information, developed in consultation with experts and concerned organizations, including the National Questionnaire. The survey was piloted in 2019 in 43 countries, with the findings presented the same year at a side event during the UN's High-Level Political Forum. In 2022, as many as 123 countries responded to the survey voluntarily. The methodology was updated in 2020. Since 2019, UNESCO has issued annual reports on progress in adopting and implementing Access to Information legal guarantees worldwide. These reports capture different dimensions of implementing legal guarantees for public access to information worldwide based on data collected through the UNESCO Survey on Public Access to Information. The reports' recommendations enable a better understanding of the gaps and challenges that need to be addressed by countries in their efforts towards achieving this SDG target. Reporting on SDG 16.10.2 serves as an incentive for countries to improve their legal and regulatory frameworks, their implementation and/or their enforcement. In this regard, recommendations of the reports have proven helpful for countries, which include SDG 16.10.2 in their Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs).

Link: <https://www.unesco.org/reports/access-to-information/2021/en>

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United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG)

Approach/tool: UCLG's support to, and analysis of, local reporting initiatives on SDG localization

Localizing the SDGs is a necessity to meet the global sustainability agendas, since local and regional governments (LRGs) are responsible for implementing over 65% of the SDG targets. Hence, UCLG's commitment to supporting reporting and advocacy exercises on SDG localization is two-folded. First, since 2017, on behalf of the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments, UCLG presents each year to the United Nations' High-Level Political Forum, a report providing a comprehensive analysis of LRGs' efforts to localize the SDGs, and of the degree and modalities of their involvement in national coordination mechanisms for SDG implementation and in national reporting processes (VNRs). This report is complemented by Country Profiles presenting a brief analysis of the national strategies, coordination mechanisms and reporting processes related to the 2030 Agenda. Most importantly, they highlight the involvement and, in many cases, the leading role of local and regional governments towards the localization of the SDGs. Second, UCLG supports and facilitates the development of Voluntary Subnational Reviews: elaborated by national associations of LRGs, these reports are country-wide, bottom-up reporting processes that provide analyses of the national institutional environments for SDG localization, based on the experiences of LRGs from different parts of each country in implementing the SDGs on the ground. UCLG also supports the elaboration of Voluntary Local Reviews, by cities and regions worldwide. To further promote these reporting initiatives, UCLG published Guidelines on VSRs and VLRs (in collaboration with UN-Habitat).

Links:

[Annual reports to the HLPF on SDG localization \(2017-2022\)](#)

[Country Profiles on SDG localization \(for 137 countries which reported to the HLPF in 2016-2021\)](#)

[Guidelines for VSRs](#)

Guidelines for VLRs: Volumes [1](#) and [2](#)

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