



HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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Frequently Asked Questions

What is the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development?

- The High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development convened under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council, which takes place from **10 to 19 July** at **UN Headquarters in New York**, is the central platform for reviewing progress and advancing implementation of [the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#) and the [17 Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#), adopted by world leaders in September 2015.
- The Forum is an annual high-level event which provides a unique opportunity for countries to exchange experiences and share plans on the implementation of the Agenda and the SDGs, identifying gaps, lessons learned and providing policy recommendations.
- It aims to rally further action to achieve the Goals by 2030 as the international community rebuilds a more resilient, inclusive and prosperous world in the midst of the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, rising geopolitical tensions, a weak global economy and a worsening climate crisis.
- It seeks to address, in a cohesive and integrated manner, the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.
- The Forum also provides a platform to build multi-stakeholder partnerships and promote international cooperation as the world accelerates global efforts to achieve the SDGs.

Why is the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development important?

- The Forum is about follow-up and review of implementation and progress of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. It is a crucial time for the international community to assess where the Goals stand and what needs to be done to accelerate action.
- The Forum serves as a global hub for governments, UN system organizations, intergovernmental bodies and the major groups and other stakeholders to share plans, exchange ideas and best practices and



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review progress.

- By providing political leadership, guidance and recommendations, the Forum enables countries to accelerate progress towards achieving the Goals and targets.
- A central feature of the Forum is the Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) that Member States present. These VNRs showcase the action countries are taking to achieve the SDGs and lessons learned.
- The Forum also provides an opportunity for countries, civil society and businesses to highlight the actions they are taking to achieve the SDGs and ensure that the SDGs remain relevant and ambitious.

Why is this year's Forum of particular significance?

- Global challenges continue to hinder progress towards the SDGs. The world is grappling with severe financial, energy, food and humanitarian crises triggered or amplified by the war in Ukraine. These compound the lingering impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and the long-standing climate emergency, against the backdrop of a worsening macro-economic situation in many countries.
- The Forum will assess the impacts of these interlinked crises on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and all the SDGs. Participants will discuss policies and transformations needed to overcome the crises, make up the lost ground on the SDGs and shift the world on a path to achieve SDGs.
- With 2023 marking the mid-point of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, this year's Forum will be a key contributor to preparations for the [SDG Summit](#) on 18 and 19 September. It will serve as a pre-Summit event to help identify substantive priorities, raise awareness and generate political momentum for the Summit. The Summit will be an opportunity to turbo-charge collective efforts to make fundamental shifts, undertake transformative actions and deliver meaningful progress for people and planet by 2030.

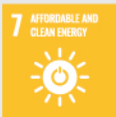
What are the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)?

- Eight years ago, when member states adopted the SDGs, countries embarked on a journey to achieve the 2030 Agenda to promote prosperity,



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address inequalities while protecting the environment.

- The 17 SDGs, the cornerstone of the Agenda, offer the most practical and effective pathway to tackle the causes of poverty, violent conflict, human rights abuses, climate change and environmental degradation.
- The SDGs reflect an understanding that development everywhere must integrate economic growth, social well-being and environmental protection.
- The list of the 17 SDGs, which contain 169 targets, can be found at <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>

How will the SDGs be achieved?

- Governments have the primary responsibility for implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The achievement of SDGs is underpinned by the efforts and contributions of all stakeholders in strong partnerships.
- The successful implementation of the SDGs relies on countries' sustainable development policies, plans and programmes. While led by countries, it also needs an enabling environment of international cooperation and solidarity.
- Governments continue to develop national indicators to assist in monitoring progress made on the goals and targets, taking into account the global indicator framework.
- The mobilization of resources at both the domestic and international levels is essential to achieve the goals.

In the eight years since the SDGs were adopted, what actions has the international community taken to achieve the Goals?

- Many governments from both developed and developing countries have included the SDGs in their national policies and strategies and development plans. Many have taken concrete actions, measures, and initiatives on advancing various SDGs in line with their national priorities, reaching out to communities and stakeholders. There have been increasing efforts to raise awareness about the SDGs and catalyze action among civil society, businesses, academia, media and other groups



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- Many businesses have also integrated the SDGs into their companies' practices and invested in new technologies.
- Examples of concrete actions and initiatives by governments and other stakeholders to accelerate SDG implementation can be found online at: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgactions>.



Has there been progress in achieving the SDGs?

- The proportion of children under 5 years suffering from chronic undernutrition, or stunting, decreased from 24.6% in 2015 to 22.3% in 2022.
- The percentage of young people completing upper secondary school increased from 53% in 2015 to 58% in 2021, slowing down relative to its progress in the preceding five-year period. The participation rate in organized learning one year before the official primary entry age has stagnated at around 75% since 2015, still far from the target of ensuring that all girls and boys have access to quality pre-primary education by 2030.
- As of 1 January 2023, women's representation in national parliaments (lower chamber and unicameral parliaments) reached 26.5%, up slightly from 22.3% in 2015.
- Access to clean cooking fuels and technologies increased to 71% in 2021, from 64% in 2015.



Where have there been setbacks?

- At the midpoint of implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the world is not on track to meet most of the Goals by 2030. There has been progress in some areas (highlighted above), however, progress against a very worrying proportion of targets is either moving much too slowly or has regressed.
- A preliminary assessment of the roughly 140 SDG targets with data show only about 12% are on track; close to half, though showing progress, are moderately or severely off track and some 30% have either seen no movement or regressed below the 2015 baseline.
- Given current trends, 575 million people (nearly 7% of the world's population) will still be living in extreme poverty in 2030 compared to 800 million in 2015 (or 10.8%). An estimated 30% of the world population—





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about 2.3 billion people—were affected by moderate or severe food insecurity in 2021, an increase of almost 350 million people since the beginning of the pandemic.

- The rate of improvement in primary energy intensity, which had already slowed in recent years, dropped to 0.6% in 2020. This makes it the worst year for energy intensity improvement since the global financial crisis.

How does the Forum guide progress on the SDGs?

- During the Forum, countries will share the lessons they have learnt in the context of implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- Participants will discuss policies and transformations needed to overcome the crises, make up the lost ground on the SDGs and shift the world on to a path to achieve the 2030 Agenda. The discussions will be guided by the continuing strong commitment to realizing the 2030 Agenda and reinforcing international solidarity.

What will be the focus and format of the Forum this year?

- This year's Forum will focus on the theme, "*Accelerating the recovery from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at all levels*".
- Thirty-nine countries and the European Union will present their Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs)—the actions they have taken to achieve the SDGs. Regular reviews by the HLPF 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.
- Since the adoption of the SDGs, 188 countries and the European Union have carried out 331 VNR presentations.
- The Forum will review in-depth SDG 6 on clean water and sanitation, 7 on affordable and clean energy, 9 on industry, innovation, and infrastructure, 11 on sustainable cities and communities, and 17 on partnerships for the Goals.
- The 2023 SDG Progress Report: Special Edition will be a main feature at the Forum presenting new data and underscoring the need for further action to ensure that we achieve the Goals by the 2030 deadline. The



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Forum will also place a spotlight on the transformative policy recommendations coming from the 2023 Global Sustainable Development Report.



Who will be attending the HLPF?

- Ministers and other high-level participants will discuss effective, inclusive, and transformative measures to address the impacts of the current global challenges and the lingering effects of COVID-19 on the SDGs.
- At the Forum, world leading experts and voices, including economists, environment scientists, and social activists, will present their visions and their experiences in the face of the impacts inflicted by the multiple crises.
- UN system organizations, intergovernmental organizations at the international and regional levels, civil society, the private sector, academia and other stakeholders will also participate and provide major inputs.



Which countries are presenting their Voluntary National Reviews this year?

- This year, 39 presenters will carry out their Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs). They are: Bahrain, Barbados, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Canada, Central African Republic, Comoros, Chile, Croatia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, European Union, Fiji, France, Guyana, Iceland, Ireland, Kuwait, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Maldives, Mongolia, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Slovakia, St Kitts & Nevis, Tajikistan, Timor-Leste, Turkmenistan, United Republic of Tanzania, Uzbekistan, Vietnam, Zambia.
- One country and the European Union are presenting for the first time, 37 are conducting their second reviews*, and one for the third time**. Their reviews may be found at: <https://hlpf.un.org/2023/vnrs>



How many countries have presented VNRs to date?

- The VNRs kicked-off in 2016, which marked the first-time countries presented their plans to achieve the SDGs. With the 2023 HLPF, 331 VNRs have been carried out by 188 countries and the European Union.



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Why are the VNRs significant?

- The VNRs are voluntary and demonstrate the commitment of the individual countries and the international community to mobilize efforts towards achieving the Goals.
- Reviews by countries at the Forum provide the opportunity to mobilize support and advice to overcome shared challenges, identify new and emerging issues and provide recommendations for implementing the Goals.
- The presentation of VNRs is a peer learning experience and can spur further action to implement the SDGs.
- Success in achieving the SDGs will help to address some of the most pressing global challenges, such as climate change, providing a better life for all people and building a firm foundation for peace and stability in all societies, everywhere.

What is sustainable development?

- Sustainable development seeks to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Sustainable development calls for concerted efforts towards building an inclusive, sustainable and resilient future for people and planet.
- Ending poverty, reducing inequalities and combatting climate change are indispensable requirements for the achievement of sustainable development.
- The 2030 Agenda addresses the interlinkages between the social, economic, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development, since a holistic approach that incorporates these three elements is essential if we are to achieve sustainable development.