



VNR LABS

HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM

Localizing SDGs: Integrating Voluntary Local Reviews into Voluntary National Review Processes

Wednesday, 13 July, 1-2 pm

Conference Room 11

The 2030 Agenda and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) cannot be achieved without sustained and inclusive local action. Local and sub-national governments play a pivotal role in addressing core sustainable development issues including poverty, food security, access to quality education, health care and water and sanitation services, and in advancing gender equality and reducing inequalities, among others. It has been estimated that at least 100 of the 169 SDG targets will not be reached without proper engagement and co-ordination with local and regional governments. Local and regional governments have also been at the forefront of addressing the COVID19 pandemic, and efforts to build back better from it.

National governments are increasingly utilizing Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) not only to highlight national level efforts, advances and challenges in SDG implementation, but to also capture the efforts of local and regional governments and other local stakeholders in support of SDG implementation. Many Member States are also engaging local stakeholders on SDG localization, including in the process of elaborating VNRs.

As part of their efforts to localize the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, local and regional governments are increasingly engaging in subnational reviews of their SDG implementation, also called Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs).¹ While VLRs are not mandated by the 2030 Agenda, the process of preparing them provides multiple benefits to the entities engaging in them and to SDG implementation at large, including by contributing to the collection and analysis of timely, accurate and disaggregated data on SDG implementation and on the furthest behind at the local level; bringing stakeholders closer to decision-making processes; strengthening multilevel governance; and fostering integration of the SDGs into local planning. The practice of preparing VLRs is being taken up not only by capital and large cities, but also by a growing number of smaller cities, provinces, and districts, including in rural areas.

The present VNR/VLR Lab, which will include contributions from both national and local Governments and other relevant actors, will provide participants the opportunity to reflect upon the growing relationship between VNRs and VLRs, as well as coordination between national and local SDG implementation efforts more generally. Key questions for discussion will include:

- How do Voluntary National Reviews and Voluntary Local Reviews inform and strengthen each other?

¹ While there is no centralized database of all VLRs, those shared with DESA are collected here:
<https://sdgs.un.org/topics/voluntary-local-reviews>



- What innovative approaches are being taken to raise awareness on the SDGs at local level?
- What experiences, challenges and innovative approaches can be shared in terms of:
 - Fostering participatory approaches to the preparation of VLRs that “leave no one behind”
 - Gathering information and data relevant to SDGs at local level
- How have VNR and VLR processes contributed to dialogue and planning between national and sub-national levels in terms of SDG implementation?