Session 2: VNR Overview

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What this presentation will cover

1. What is a VNR and why undertake one?
2. Progress of VNRs globally and in the Pacific
3. Organization & Preparation of a VNR
4. National Outputs for the VNR process
5. Lessons learnt from the VNR process
6. Support for the VNR process
What is a Voluntary National Review?

As part of the follow-up and review mechanisms the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

It’s a regular and inclusive review of progress at the national and sub-national levels, which is country-led and country-driven"

1. Voluntary
2. State-led
3. Undertaken by both developed and developing countries
4. Involve multiple stakeholders

The process of carrying out the voluntary national review should not be seen as separate from implementation of the SDGs. Rather than an end in itself, the VNR is a process by which countries take stock of and assess progress – and shortcomings - in implementation of the goals and targets.
Why conduct a Voluntary National Review?

- Facilitate the sharing of experiences
- • Successes
- • Challenges
- • Lessons learned
- Thus accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda

- Mobilize multi-stakeholder support and partnerships for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals

- Strengthen policies and institutions of governments

“The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results”
## Where we are at globally with VNRs

### 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>
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<tr>
<td>Asia-Pacific</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>LA and Caribbean</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WEOG and Other States</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eastern European Group</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Legend:**
- **Number of Countries**
- **Presented VNR or Will in 2020**
- **Not Presented VNR**
## VNRs in the Pacific

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

High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development
Voluntary National Reviews
Organization and Preparation of a VNR

Key things to address:

- Use of existing reports
- Workplan
- Coordination
- Scope
- Data needs
- Stakeholder engagement
Development of a Workplan

• Look at producing both a detailed and broad level workplan

• Disseminate broadly to government partners and all key stakeholders

• Plan backwards from the key deadlines (discussed soon)

• Update and modify as necessary

Covered in Session 6 of this workshop
Coordination is the key

• An entity within government needs to be responsible for the overall coordination of the VNR
  • This could be an existing body/institution or an *ad hoc* arrangement,
• A small advisory group could be considered to lead the process of writing of the VNR.

• Collaboration with other relevant government ministries, agencies and relevant stakeholders is needed in order to provide information and data.
• In the interest of country ownership, it is highly desirable that the drafting process is led by government in all respects
Focus areas of the VNR

Focus of the VNR report

SDGs
The SG guidelines encourage countries to report on the progress in relation to all 17 SDGs. Where priority goals have been identified, countries could cover those in greater depth.

Other Global Initiatives
- SAMOA Pathway
- Beijing Platform for Action (Gender)
- Paris Agreement on Climate Change (lots more)

National SDP 2004-2023
State Plans

Covered in Session 3 of this workshop
Use existing reports

National development plans and national sustainable development strategies

Reports submitted to international bodies, including human rights mechanisms

State Sector Progress Reports

SDG reports prepared at the national level (eg, SDG preparedness audit)

Covered in Session 8 of this workshop
Engagement with Key Stakeholders

- Who are they?
- Why engage with them?
- What their roles could be?
- Modalities to engage with them?

Covered in Session 5 of this workshop
Role of data/statistics in VNR reporting

Data/Statistics should be present in a VNR report in two key capacities:

- Providing evidence of progress in sustainable development
- Update on the process and status of implementing SDG indicators into national processes

Covered in Session 7 of this workshop
Role of data/statistics in VNR reporting (cont)

The Reality

- All countries in the Pacific are struggling with meeting their national Data & Statistics demands
- But you can still tell a good story without data and statistics
  - Availability of data should not influence the stories being told in your VNR

However

Data and Statistics, if reliable and timely, can help add evidence and value to your stories
- Can support where your country stands now
- Can track which direction progress is going
  - Are your policy and planning interventions working?
National outputs in the VNR Process

3 Key Outputs need to be produced during the VNR process

- **2 Documents**
  - Production of the Main Messages: 21 April
  - Production of the VNR Report: 12 June

- **The Presentation itself**
  - Delivered at the HLPF: 14-16 July
1. Production of the Main Messages

What and Why Main Messages?
• Allow preparation by stakeholders, including other countries, for the HLPF
• Need not be a conclusive summary of the VNR, but can contain emerging conclusions from the review
• Provide an indication of some of the principal findings of the review

Other important information on Main Messages
• **The word count may not exceed 700 words**
• Are translated into English by the Secretariat if they are submitted in any other UN language and are issued as an official document of the UN
• Are posted online

Go to: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/vnrs/
2. Production of the VNR Report - Process

Who is involved in the production of the VNR Report?

Share the load

Who leads?
SDG Working Group?
Which department?
Which person?

Who else is involved?
Line Ministries?
CSOs?
Academia?

Decide on structure of the VNR report

Will go through guidelines in VNR Handbook

FSM Decide – need to accommodate State inputs

Covered in Session 3 of this workshop
2. Production of the VNR Report - Structure

1. Highlights (summary)
   • overall progress, best practices, lessons learned, key challenges and support needed

2. Introduction
   • context and objectives of the review, key features of the country context, policy architecture and policy tools for integrating the three dimensions of sustainable development

3. Methodology of the review
   • discuss the process for preparation of the national review
   • whole-of-government approach and mechanisms for stakeholder engagement
2. Production of the VNR Report - Structure

4. Policy and Enabling Environment
a) Creating ownership of the SDGs;
   • efforts made towards all stakeholders to inform them on and involve them in the SDGs
b) Incorporation of the SDGs in national framework;
   • initiatives undertaken to adapt the SDGs and targets to its national circumstances
   • policy coherence and interlinkages
   • implementation challenges and way forward
c) Integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development
d) Leaving no one behind
e) Institutional mechanisms
   • how the country has adapted its institutional framework in light of the 2030 Agenda, coordination and integration to achieve policy coherence
f) Structural issues
2. Production of the VNR Report - Structure

5. Goals and targets
- Brief information on progress and the status of all 17 SDGs
- Critical difficulties in reaching goals and how they have been addressed

6. Means of implementation
- How MOI are mobilized, difficulties, and what additional resources are needed.
- How financial systems and resource allocations are aligned with 2030 Agenda
- Technology; capacity development and data needs; multi-stakeholder partnerships

7. Next steps
- Next steps to enhance implementation, national and sub-national level, dissemination

8. Conclusion
- Summary of analysis, findings and policy implications and how to apply lessons learned in the future

9. Annex
- Statistical annex with data and/or annexes to showcase best practices or comments from stakeholders
3. Presentation at the HLPF

Total time for each country

- **30 min**

Presentation
Includes the use of audio-visual material, including videos

- **15 min**

Question time
From other countries and stakeholders

- **15 min**
3. Presentation at the HLPF (cont)

What to present?

Countries choose what they decide to present
- Highlighting Key Message from the review
- Touch on critical issues

Who presents?

Recommended that a minister or person of higher rank lead the presentation of the VNR

- Prime Minister
- Deputy Prime Minister
- Minister from a range of portfolios
- Team of presenters
  - Becoming more common
  - Includes CSO
3. Presentation at the HLPF - DESA preparation Questionnaire

Questionnaire

Q1) whether the country presenting for the first time prefers the panel or individual-style presentation format for its presentation

Q2) preliminary information on the composition of the delegation and who will present the VNR

Q3) information on audio-visual materials, including videos, that will be used

Q4) any other special requests, including dates on which the lead presenter (minister) is/is not available, so that the draft schedule for the VNR presentations can be prepared

Panel Format
The countries in a VNR session (between two and four) each make their presentations. Once all countries in the session have presented, questions are posed to the presenting countries

Individual Format
A country presents, followed by questions from countries in the audience, as well as from major groups and other stakeholders
Some key lessons learnt from 2019 VNR countries

- Start the process early
- Make a solid work plan, including stakeholder consultations
- Determine drafting arrangements early – who does what and by when?
- Make your presentation interesting
- Know your presenting team well ahead of time
Support to the VNR Process

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

- 3 global workshops
- Regional and sub-regional 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

The last 4 documents listed, plus examples of all country VNR reports and main messages can be found at:

https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/vnrs/

Covered in Session 10 of this workshop