

“Engaging social groups in the VNR process and reaching the furthest behind – A case study of persons with disabilities and indigenous peoples”

Wednesday, 8 July from 12:30pm to 14:00pm (EDT)

Summary

The principles in the 2030 Agenda to guide the follow-up and review processes state that “they will be open, inclusive, participatory and transparent for all people and will support the reporting by all relevant stakeholders.” An analysis of the 2017 VNR reports by the Committee for Development Planning noted that “among the groups that receive special focus so that they are not left behind, women receive the most attention (addressed by 41 out of the 43 countries reviewed), followed by persons with disabilities (40 countries)” and that indigenous peoples were severely underrepresented. This VNR lab will explore experiences in engaging persons with disabilities and indigenous peoples in the VNR reporting processes, identify obstacles, good practices and what lessons can be learned to reach those furthest behind.

Background

Indigenous peoples

There are over 476 million Indigenous people living in 90 countries and account for 6.2 percent of the global population¹. However, indigenous peoples are nearly three times as likely to be living in extreme poverty. Indigenous peoples are invisible and generalized in national statistics as “vulnerable groups”, a definition that undermine their legal standing as subjects of international law, as well as their own self-identification as indigenous peoples, rights which are upheld by the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Consequently, for indigenous peoples the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has the potential to be transformative, if its implementation respects the principles of universality, human rights, participation, equality and environmental sustainability. The 2030 Agenda consists of 17 goals and 169 targets of which 92 % are closely linked to human rights. As a result of indigenous peoples’ strong engagement in the process towards the 2030 Agenda, the final resolution “Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development²” refers to indigenous peoples 6 times, three times in the political declaration; two in the targets under Goal 2 on Zero Hunger (target 2.3) and Goal 4 on education (target

¹ Available at https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_735607.pdf

² A/RES/70/1

4.5) – and one in the section on follow up and review that calls for indigenous peoples’ participation. 73 out of the 169 targets have substantial links to the UN Declaration on Rights of Indigenous Peoples.³

In this regard, indigenous peoples urge countries to recognize, protect and realize their rights in national, regional and global processes related to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Often, indigenous peoples do not receive adequate information regarding the ongoing work towards achievement of the SDGs at the national level or when countries are undertaking voluntary national reviews (VNRs). As a result, indigenous peoples’ visions, perspectives, initiatives and their meaningful participation are largely absent. For instance, in the 2019 HLPF “Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality” of the 47 countries that presented their VNRs, there were 18 countries with indigenous peoples.⁴

Persons with disabilities

Persons with disabilities, constituting 15 percent of the world’s population, continue to face discrimination and discriminations numerous barriers and to their full inclusion and participation in the life of their communities. It sheds light on their disproportionate levels of poverty; their lack of access to education, health services and employment; and their underrepresentation in decision-making and political participation.

Progress has been made over the past decades to overcome these challenges and the UNs’ commitment to promote the full and effective participation of persons with disabilities as agents of change and beneficiaries of development has been translated into both disability-specific and other relevant international commitments, including the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), which was adopted in 2006, building on many decades of the work of the United Nations and has been ratified by 113 State Parties as of 09 June 2020. In line with the Assembly’s commitments, the international community has been addressing the rights, well-being and perspectives of persons with disabilities in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Goals, their processes, mechanisms, and monitoring and evaluation.

Building on many years of the collaboration within the UN system, the launch of United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy by the Secretary-General took place in 2019 to ensure that equality and the full participation of persons with disabilities in the work of the United Nations system further advances the mainstreaming of disability in the UN system and its operational frameworks.

The 2030 Agenda includes seven goals and targets and 11 indicators explicitly making reference to persons with disabilities, covering access to education and employment, including education facilities that are accessible to learners with disabilities, inclusion and

³ Available at <https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2016/10/Briefing-Paper-on-Indigenous-Peoples-Rights-and-the-2030-Agenda.pdf>

⁴ Indigenous peoples and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Joan Carling, Co-convenor, IPMG, February 2020.

participation of persons with disabilities, accessible transport, accessible public and green spaces, and building the capacity of countries to disaggregate data by disability.

As the CRPD recognizes the importance of actively involving persons with disabilities, including through their representative organizations in the development and implementation of legislation, policies and other decision-making processes, it helps that countries ensure their participation in the VNRs processes. For instance, the 2019 Voluntary National Reviews Synthesis Report states that many reviews outline sector-specific policies, national action plans and laws to promote the rights and equal opportunities for persons with disabilities. Twelve VNRs mention either a national strategy on disability or national sector-specific strategy with a priority axis on disability.⁵

Despite progress and considerable efforts, the challenges that persons with disabilities and indigenous peoples face around the world persist due to stigmatization and discriminations as well as cultural and historical exclusion. This year's discussion is very pertinent since the world is facing global challenges - from the pandemic crisis, such as COVID-19 as well as climate change, extreme poverty and the spread of conflict-, that have exacerbated the situation and pre-existing inequalities of both persons with disabilities and indigenous peoples, challenging them even more to achieve their inclusion as both beneficiaries and agents of change in society and development in alignment with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Above all, persons with disabilities and indigenous peoples will share their experiences in engaging in the VNR reporting processes, identify obstacles, good practices and the lessons learned in this process.

Objectives

- Explore experiences in engaging persons with disabilities and indigenous peoples in the VNRs reporting processes;
- Identify obstacles, good practices; and
- Exchange of lessons learned to influence in the VNRs reporting processes
- Explore options for policy/dialogue space for continuing discussion on inclusion and accessibility of the VNR processes.

Expected output

- Promote knowledge and understanding about the situation of persons with disabilities and indigenous peoples and the need to be included in the VNR processes under all Sustainable Development Goals;
- Identify strategies to improve the contributions of persons with disabilities and indigenous peoples to reflect their issues and concerns into the VNRs and the high-level political forum;

⁵ Persons with disabilities, page 31. Available at https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/252302019_VNR_Synthesis_Report_DESA.pdf

- Increase the meaningful participation of persons with disabilities and indigenous peoples in the preparation of VNRs as well as in HLPF related regional and global meetings/events.
- Discuss options as to how the information collected in the VNRs can provide a knowledge base for improving other HLPF mechanisms to be inclusive of disability and indigenous perspectives

Webinar setup

- It is expected that the event will be interactive with a short opening and closing remarks
- Presentation by panelists (Indigenous peoples, Person with disabilities, Member State) followed by questions and answers.
- Discussions will be facilitated by a moderator.
- The webinar will be conducted in English only

Registration

Please note that attendance is limited to ECOSOC accredited NGOs and members of a United Nations Major Group. Please consult the lists for both categories in the following:

- ECOSOC accredited NGOs: <http://csonet.org/content/documents/E.2018.inf.5.pdf>
- United Nations Major Groups: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/mgos>

United Nations staff and Member States are also welcome to attend the event.

To register to the event please provide your information using the following link:

<https://bit.ly/vnrlab-ips-pwds-2020>

Deadline to register for the event is **1 July 2020** and you will receive a link for the virtual VNR Lab once your registration has been confirmed.