



**United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
Office of ECOSOC Support and Coordination**

**Inter-regional Workshop
Concept Note**

**Experiences and Lessons Learned from the
ECOSOC National Voluntary Presentations**

2-4 December 2015

Jamaica

I. Background

The National Voluntary Presentations (NVPs) were mandated by General Assembly resolution 61/16 to enable countries to assess and present progress towards the Internationally Agreed Development Goals (IADGs), including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The NVP were conducted between 2007 and 2015 in the context of the ECOSOC Annual Ministerial Review (AMR), a function of the ECOSOC established by the 2005 World Summit to follow-up on the United Nations development agenda.

Since their inception, the NVPs have been critical instruments for ECOSOC to review the status of implementation of the MDGs, and other internationally agreed development goals at the national level. They have also been an opportunity for Governments to share experiences and good practices to accelerate progress and align national strategies with these goals.

Starting in 2016, the national reviews will be conducted annually by the high-level political forum for sustainable development, under the auspices of ECOSOC¹. The forum was established by the Rio+20 Outcome Document and subsequently mandated to follow-up and review the implementation of the sustainable development goals².

II. Introduction

The NVP reviews have been an opportunity for volunteering countries to use the IADGs/MDGs as a framework to review development progress, identify challenges and define practical measures to address remaining obstacles, including initiatives that could be scaled up. The Presentations have also been a valuable opportunity for Ministers and senior government officials to share experiences and distil lessons with respect to effective policies and strategies to achieve the MDGs, as well as to examine emerging development challenges and priorities.

Reviews³ of the NVP exercise recognized that the NVPs provided Governments with an important opportunity to better align national development strategies with internationally agreed development goals. They were also critical instruments for Governments to promote accountable, comprehensive and effective national development strategies, owing to the inputs of a broader range of national stakeholders in policy design, assessment and implementation.

For many countries, however, integrating economic, social and environmental considerations, enhancing participation of non-governmental actors and incorporating review findings into national development strategies remain significant challenges.

¹ See General Assembly resolution 68/1 on the strengthening of the ECOSOC and 67/290 on the format and organizational aspects of the HLPF.

² See the 2030 Development Agenda for Sustainable Development.

³ Two Expert Group Meetings were organized by UNDESA in October 2010 and in November 2011, respectively, to review and improve the NVP process and its impact on national development planning.

Lessons learned so far have stressed the importance of conducting more rigorous assessments of progress and systematic follow-up of review findings to increase their usefulness and impact on development planning. They have also highlighted the need to build capacity to conduct goal-oriented, evidence-based, and participatory reviews.

Building national capacities to carry out effective reviews will indeed be essential to the formulation of effective development strategies for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Learning from past experience is a first important step in this direction. As Member States contemplate the new phase of national reviews under the high-level political forum, it is critical to draw lessons from the NVPs.

The Department of Economic and Social Affairs, in collaboration with ECLAC Sub-regional Headquarters for the Caribbean, proposes to organize an inter-regional capacity development workshop to strengthen review capacities of policy officials and experts that have been involved in the NVP exercise. The workshop should be viewed as a continuum with the Department's efforts to assist countries in the transition to the new development agenda and the SDGs.

III. Main Objectives

The objectives of the inter-regional workshop will be two-fold:

1. To facilitate sharing of experiences and lessons learned from the NVP progress reviews among senior government officials and experts that have been involved in the process with a view to strengthen future reviews as a basis for policy-making.
2. To strengthen the capacities of participants to use goal-oriented, evidence-based, and participatory frameworks to formulate, implement and review policies and strategies for sustainable development.

IV. Scope of the discussion

The NVPs provide a wealth of information on national development challenges and policies and strategies to address them, as well as tools, methodologies and practices used to measure and analyse progress. They also highlight critical capacity constraints that countries face in using goal-oriented and participatory approaches for policy formulation, implementation and review.

The inter-regional capacity development workshop will focus on the experience of NVP developing countries in conducting effective reviews of development progress. In particular, it will:

- Take stock of specific challenges and capacity gaps encountered by NVP developing countries in conducting goal-oriented, evidence-based and participatory reviews of progress;

- Discuss analytical tools and methodologies used to review and analyse progress as a basis for policy-making and identify good practices;
- Analyse new practices and analytical tools available to assist Governments in filling existing capacity gaps and enable them to conduct more effective reviews in the future.

V. Expected Outputs

1. Create a collection of national experiences, good practices and lessons learned that can guide and support future review and implementation of sustainable development strategies.
2. Establish a network of experts and policy-makers that have participated in the NVP exercise that can continue to exchange knowledge, experience and expertise.

VI. Methodology

The workshop will incorporate a range of learning and knowledge sharing opportunities and approaches, including presentations, panel discussions, and hands on exercises. Participants will be afforded the opportunity to share and learn from national country experiences in implementing national development strategies and reviewing progress. Innovative tools and techniques, for, the formulation, implementation and review of effective policies and strategies for sustainable development will be presented, discussed and documented. One or two facilitators will guide the work of participants throughout the workshop, which will be conducted in English and Spanish.

VII. Target Audience

Participants will include senior government officials, experts and participants from Permanent Missions in New York who have engaged in the NVP process. Participants will be drawn from developing NVP countries in Asia-Pacific, Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean. Such a broad regional representation is intended to provide diversity of experiences, knowledge and perspectives and provide an opportunity for knowledge sharing and discussion.

VIII. Logistics and Other Details

- The duration of the workshop will be 3 days
- The workshop will take place in Jamaica, 2-4 December 2015 (tbc)
- An information/logistic note will be shared with confirmed participants towards the end of September. It will contained information on venue, directions to the venue, accommodation, and local contacts.

Annex II- List of NVP expected to participate

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN:

Barbados (2007)
Bolivia (2009, 2014)
Brazil (2010, 2012)
Chile (2008)
Ecuador (2012)
Guatemala (2010)
Jamaica (2009)
Mexico (2011, 2014)
Peru (2013)
Venezuela (2011)
Belize (non-NVP)
Colombia (non-NVP)
Bahamas (non-NVP)

AFRICA

Algeria (2012)
Cape Verde (2007)
Ethiopia (2007)
Ghana (2007)
Kenya (2012)
Kuwait (2014)
Mali (2009)
Mauritius (2011, 2012)
Malawi (2011)
Namibia (2010)
Nigeria (2013)
Republic of Congo (2010)
Qatar (2011, 2012, 2014)
Senegal (2011, 2012)
Sudan (2009, 2014)
Tanzania (2008)
Gambia (2014)
Zambia (2015)

ASIA & THE PACIFIC

Bangladesh (2007, 2011),
Cambodia (2007)
China (2009)
Lao PDR (2008)
Mongolia (2010, 2015)
Pakistan (2011)
Sri Lanka (2009)
Philippines (2015)
Thailand (2014)
Vietnam (2013)
Belarus (2011)
Georgia (2014)
Kazakhstan (2008)
Kyrgyzstan (2015)
Moldova (2010)
Palestine (2014)
Ukraine (2012)