

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FROM THE HLPF 101 WEBINAR IN ENGLISH UN DESA

13 DECEMBER 2018

**Q: How many of the sub indicators focus on youth?**

**A:** There are five SDG indicators that explicitly address youth or young people, tied to SDGs on education, employment, climate change, peace and security (indicators 4.1.1, 4.3.1, 4.4.1, 8.5.1, 8.5.2, 8.6.1, 8.b.1, 13.b.1, and 16.2.3). There are also 16 indicators that directly or indirectly address children. An indicator can indirectly focus on a particular group of people without explicitly mentioning them (for example, the number of students enrolled in primary and secondary education is related to youth). The list of SDG indicators can be found at:

[https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/Global%20Indicator%20Framework%20after%20refinement\\_Eng.pdf](https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/Global%20Indicator%20Framework%20after%20refinement_Eng.pdf)

**Q: The number of interlinkages seems huge. Are there practical examples of implementing interlinked SDGs?**

**A:** Yes, there are many interlinkages among the SDGs. An example of this would be linking agriculture (SDG 2) to other goals like climate change (SDG 13). There have been expert group meetings, workshops, and other meetings at the national, regional and international levels that address interlinkages specifically, including an expert group meeting that addressed Interlinkages in advance of the 2018 HLPF. Information on the Interlinkages meeting can be found at:

<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&type=13&nr=2592&menu=1634>

**Q: Voluntary National Reviews – Should countries report on all the goals or only the ones under review for the given year?**

**A:** The follow up and review process encourages all goals to be addressed, especially in the VNRs. The priorities are decided at the country level - in your country, there may be some goals that are more relevant than others, and countries will focus on the SDGs most relevant to them. There are no restrictions - we encourage everyone to come every year to review all SDGs. The reason there are a set of goals under review each year is to focus the review of progress and create a framework of looking at the interlinkages through the lens of a specific set of SDGs.

**Q: What is the incentive for governments to participate in a VNR?**

**A:** Voluntary national reviews (VNRs) are part of the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda. Regular reviews at the HLPF are to be “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”. The VNRs enable the sharing of experiences, including successes, challenges and lessons learned, with a view to accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Many countries have reported that organizing and planning a VNR has helped to strengthen institutions and to break down silos at the national level to accelerate progress towards sustainable

development. This process has enabled countries to strengthen the work they do across different sectors and has often led to the creation of new national-level bodies such as Multi-stakeholder Sustainable Development Councils dedicated to implementing the SDGs. Countries have also reported that the exchange of best practices and lessons learned during the HLPF has been useful to accelerate progress. Conducting a VNR also provides an incentive to improve and expand data collection and analysis at the national and international levels, supporting evidence-based decision making.

**Q: What does the asterisk mean next to the country name on [the website for VNRs](#)?**

**A:** In 2019, there are 41 countries that are presenting VNRs for the first time, and 10 that will be presenting for the second time. These 10 countries have an asterisk next to their name on the website.

**Q: I would like more information about side events and submitting documents**

**A:** There is a process to submit proposals for Side Events. By joining the mailing list, you will get more information on this process and will receive a call for inputs to the HLPF. As was practice at the 2018 HLPF, each Major Group and other Stakeholder constituency will have one guaranteed spot for a side event during the HLPF. Information about submitting documents is also shared through the mailing list.

**Q: How are human rights addressed during the HLPF and in VNRs?**

**A:** The 2030 Agenda is a human rights-based agenda, and the SDGs are inclusive of the issue of human rights of all kinds, as agreed upon in the UN Charter. The way they are addressed at the HLPF depends on the speaker, the group, and the types of rights they want to review. Because the VNRs are voluntary and state-led, it is the responsibility of the member State to decide how to best address these issues within their respective VNR presentations, but during the thematic review of the SDGs expert level actors, including Major Groups and other Stakeholders, are also welcome to provide their knowledge and views in all areas of human rights. The HLPF has already heard presentations and conducted discussions around topics such as the right to food, the right to water, land tenure rights, intellectual property rights, the rights of women and girls, health and reproductive rights. In 2019, the review of SDGs 4, 8, 10, 13 and 16 will also directly address various human rights issues.

**Q: Are there any countries that will never participate in a VNR?**

**A:** 102 countries have already undertaken a Voluntary National Review, and an additional 41 countries will present VNRs for the first time in 2019. However, VNRs are a voluntary exercise, and any country may decide to participate in a VNR, or not. Seeing other countries participate at the HLPF has proven to be a helpful impetus for countries that have not yet presented.

**Q: How are parallel/shadow reports by Major Groups and other Stakeholders addressed in addition to the VNRs?**

**A:** Parallel and shadow reports do not have a mandate within the 2030 Agenda. However, some countries choose to include these reports as part of their VNR process, and in these cases the shadow reports are posted on the UN's website at the request of the country.

**Q: How does ECOSOC involve other UN bodies such as the Security Council and the Human Rights Council in the HLPF?**

**A:** ECOSOC and the Security Council are both principal organs of the United Nations established by the UN Charter. While the Security Council has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, it does not report directly to ECOSOC, which has the responsibility for coordination, policy review and recommendations on economic, social and environmental issues and the implementation of internationally agreed development goals. The Human Rights Council is a subsidiary body of the General Assembly (another principal organ of the UN) and reports directly to the General Assembly. The HLPF is a forum and not an intergovernmental body like the General Assembly, ECOSOC or the Security Council, established in order to provide a platform for all connected UN entities and other relevant actors to coordinate, review and discuss their work relevant to implementing the 2030 Agenda. The HLPF is convened under the auspices of ECOSOC every year and under the auspices of the General Assembly every four years.

**Q: When will the themes for 2020 and following years be known?**

**A:** As decided in General Assembly Resolution 70/299, the themes for the second HLPF cycle in the years beyond 2019 will be decided during the 74<sup>th</sup> session of the General Assembly in 2019-2020.

**Q: Given that HLPF will meet twice in 2019, will there be two different outcome declarations? And if not, when will the declaration be adopted, July or September?**

**A:** The 2019 HLPF will produce one negotiated outcome, a Political Declaration, which will be adopted at the Summit in September.

**Q: Will all 51 countries report on the 6 SDGs or will some focus more on for example SDG 4?**

**A:** VNR countries are encouraged to report progress on all SDGs, but generally may focus on the SDGs that are most important to their national development priorities.

**Q: How can people join stakeholder groups including for people with disabilities?**

**A:** Specific Major Groups can be joined by contacting the Organizing Partners for that group, which can be found at:

<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/majorgroups/about>

Information on the group of persons with disabilities can be found at:

<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/majorgroups/personswithdisabilities>

**Q: How can a country volunteer to undergo a VNR?**

**A:** Once a country has decided to carry out a review, the decision is communicated to the President of ECOSOC by means of a letter from the Permanent Representative or another official of the country concerned. There are a number of other steps that countries should

consider when organising and preparing the review. Many of these, and a sample letter, are contained in the VNR [Handbook](#).

**Q: What steps are taken to address the challenges, particularly those relating to financial resources in the reviews?**

**A:** The Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA) provides a plan of action for financing sustainable development through the 2030 Agenda and is closely linked to the follow up and review process of the HLPF. Both the Financing for Development process and the HLPF generate recommendations for action, facilitate partnerships, and address challenges through continued follow-up at the national, regional and international levels, including through other relevant processes and forums that specifically address finance and other means of implementation.

**Q: Are only heads of states allowed to attend the SDG Summits?**

**A:** The Summit level calls upon member States to be represented at the highest level, and many Heads of State and Government will participate; but the SDG Summit is open to all accredited high-level representatives from governments, Major Groups and other Stakeholders, and the UN system.

#### **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:**

1. The Inter-Agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators 2018 SDGs Report:

<https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2018/>

2. The Committee on Development Policy 2018 Report, excerpt on “Leaving no one Behind”:

<https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/wp-content/uploads/sites/45/CDP-excerpt-2018-1.pdf>

3. G-STIC is a series of conferences that aim to accelerate the development, dissemination and deployment of technological innovations that enable the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). G-STIC is focused on building knowledge bases and global expert networks to support the technological transitions that are needed for the implementation of the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development. <https://2018.gstic.org/>

4. <https://dashboards.sdgindex.org/#/> - SDSN SDG Index and Dashboards Report 2018

5. <https://sdgresources.relx.com/about> - Information on the Sustainable Development Goals: Articles, tools, reports, events and more.

6. More information on the 2019 HLPF: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf/2019>