VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REVIEWS

What are countries prioritizing in their main messages?

June 2017

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Presentation Content

- VNR Countries and Main Messages

- Questions Considered for Review

- Findings

- Recommendations

VNR Countries 2017

- **44 countries** have volunteered to present national reviews on their implementation of the 2030 Agenda

- More than 2X the number of countries in 2016

VNR Countries for 2017: Afghanistan, Argentina, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Botswana, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Maldives, Monaco, Nepal, Netherlands, Nigeria, Panama, Peru, Portugal, Qatar, Slovenia, Sweden, Tajikistan, Thailand, Togo, Uruguay, Zimbabwe

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VNR Submissions

- Full Reports to be available end of June

- Main Messages were due May 19
  - Purpose: To communicate "headline findings" well in advance of the HLPF

- As of 23 June, 38 of the 44 countries had submitted their Main Messages:

Afghanistan, Argentina, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Botswana, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, ~~Cyprus~~, Czech Republic, Denmark, El Salvador, Ethiopia, ~~Guatemala~~, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran, ~~Italy~~, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Maldives, Monaco, ~~Nepal~~, Netherlands, ~~Nigeria~~, Panama, Peru, Portugal, Qatar, Slovenia, Sweden, Tajikistan, Thailand, ~~Togo~~, Uruguay, Zimbabwe

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Review of Main Messages

Together 2030, with support from World Vision, commissioned a preliminary content analysis of countries' main messages.

Objectives of the review:

- To **inform CSO engagement** in the 2017 HLPF
- To **make recommendations** for improving VNRs in 2018 and beyond

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Questions Considered

1. Did countries describe the consultation process leading up to the VNR, including engagement of civil society and other stakeholders?

2. Did countries describe the institutional arrangements in place for accountability at national level?

3. Did countries report on the participation and contributions of civil society in implementation?

4. Did countries report on actions taken to implement the agenda, balancing social, environmental and economic dimensions?

5. Did countries reference policies or programs to target support for marginalized groups and/or populations?

6. Did countries identify gaps or challenges in implementation?

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Challenges and Caveats

- Short time frame for review

- Comparison across submissions problematic b/c they vary widely in terms of length, format and content

- Most full reports were not available for reference

- Always need to be mindful of potential gaps between country reports and reality

- Attempted to provide a **preliminary overview** based on what what we have

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FINDINGS

Review of Main Messages

VNR Consultation Process and Stakeholder Engagement

Question: Did countries **describe the consultation process** leading up to the VNR, **including engagement of civil society** and other stakeholders?

Range of Reporting:

- No mention
- Still working on stakeholder engagement
- Briefly mention engagement of "relevant stakeholders"
- Briefly mention consultation with specific stakeholders, including civil society as well as the private sector, parliamentarians, etc.
- Mention consultation with marginalized groups, e.g. women, youth, persons with disabilities, farmers and pastoralists, refugees, children
- Describe the consultation in process in detail, including steps taken and stakeholders engaged

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Institutional Arrangements, Governance and Accountability

Question: Did countries describe the institutional arrangements in place for accountability at the national level?

- Nearly all countries specify the institutional arrangements established for oversight, implementation, coordination and follow-up

- Many emphasize commitment at the highest levels

- A number of countries report progress on:

    o Identifying priority goals, targets and indicators

    o Aligning and integrating the SDGs to national development plans

    o Adapting global indicators to the national context

- Much of this work is still ongoing and at different stages in the process – some countries appear to be just getting started

- **Few countries share plans for follow-up and review**

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Participation of CSOs in Implementation

Question: Did countries report on the participation and contributions of civil society in implementation?

- Nearly all countries report some form of civil society participation in implementation, with just a few exceptions

- Many countries describe providing mechanisms for civil society participation, such as:
    - Including stakeholders on government-led coordination bodies and/or technical committees
    - Conducting consultations, dialogues, awareness-raising and capacity-building sessions with civil society

- About 10 countries point to CSO-led initiatives and contributions

- A few countries list stakeholder engagement as one of their implementation challenges

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Implementation with Balance of the 3 Dimensions

Question: Did countries report on actions taken to implement the agenda, balancing social, environmental and economic dimensions?

- This is the weakest area across the submissions

- About a third of countries describe activities toward implementation and performance trends

- Of those countries, most do give equal weight to each of the three pillars

- It's not always clear whether the activities pre-date the adoption of the 2030 Agenda or have been undertaken as part of SDG implementation

- The focus of the reporting ranges, with countries addressing either the HLPF-specific goals, the goals that the country has identified as priorities, or all 17 goals

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Policies and Programs for Specific Groups and Populations

Question: Did countries reference policies or programs to target support for marginalized groups and/or populations?

- Among the few countries that mention specific strategies and actions, still fewer mention particular groups or populations of concern
- Many countries emphasize the need to support **vulnerable or disadvantaged groups** generally, without being more specific
- Specific groups or populations (**youth, students, women's groups, trade unions, indigenous peoples, refugees and IDPs**) were **more commonly mentioned as having been engaged during consultations**
- **Women and girls** often referenced under Goal 5; some refer to **children** under Goals 2 (nutrition) and/or 3 (child mortality).

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Implementation Gaps and Challenges Identified

Question: Did countries identify gaps or challenges in implementation?

- Gaps and challenges were mentioned primarily by developing countries

- The most commonly identified challenges were:
  - Localization of targets and indicators; data collection, analysis and dissemination
  - Funding for implementation, mobilization of financial resources
  - Political will, lack of effective policy coordination and coherence
  - Stakeholder participation and engagement

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Reasons for Hope

Based on the main messages submitted:

- Many countries appear to be taking their commitment to the agenda seriously, including countries in different regions, developed and developing alike.

- A number of countries have made considerable progress in setting up the institutional arrangements and enabling environment for implementation.

- Many countries are getting the message that diverse stakeholders must be included in consultations as well as implementation. Good to see women and young people mentioned frequently.

- Ample material for substantive discussions and sharing at the HLPF in July.

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Cause for Concern

However…

- **The pace of implementation is concerning** – too many countries seem to be just getting started, though it's the 2nd year of implementation.
  - Though it might be a country's first year to volunteer, they should still be reporting at this point based on two years of implementation
- **The quality of submissions needs to be elevated significantly** to match the ambition of the agenda:
  - Rather than looking back at MDG successes or how the agenda was negotiated, by now they should be reporting on implementation
  - Reports should address all 17 goals, not just the HLPF themes
  - Not enough substance. A few reports really say nothing at all – one submission fails to even mention the 2030 Agenda or the SDGs
- **Accountability is being left behind.** Too few countries discuss plans for follow-up and review at national level or how they will bring the results of the HLPF back to their countries

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Recommendations

- Establish common guidelines for format and content of main messages as well as VNR reports.

- Countries should report on progress toward all 17 SDGs, recognizing the indivisibility of the agenda and interlinkages among the goals.

- Countries need to step up the pace. They should not wait for their first VNR before getting started.

- Reports need more substance. Too few countries are reporting on their implementation activities.

- Civil society must keep demanding meaningful participation – it's positive that many mentioned youth and women, but more groups need to be included.

- To ensure no one is left behind, the most marginalized and disadvantaged must be identified and reports should explain what countries are doing to provide them with targeted support.

- The cycle of accountability must be made clear to stakeholders and described clearly in reports, including who is consulted and engaged and how.

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Assessment of Main Messages

	Afghanistan	Argentina	Azerbaijan	Bangladesh	Belarus	Belgium	Belize	Benin	Botswana	Brazil	Chile	Costa Rica	Czech Republic	Denmark	El Salvador	Ethiopia	Honduras	India	Indonesia	Iran	Japan	Jordan	Kenya	Luxembourg	Malaysia	Maldives	Monaco	Netherlands	Panama	Peru	Portugal	Qatar
VNR consultation process and stakeholder engagement	◇	◇	◇	◇	◇	❖	◇	◆	❖	◇	◇	◇	❖	◇	◇	◆	❖	◇	◆	❖	◆	❖	◆	◆	❖	◇	◇	❖	◇	◇	◇	◇
Institutional arrangements and governance	❖	◆	◆	◆	◆	◇	◆	❖	◆	❖	❖	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	❖	◆	◆	❖	❖	◆	◆	❖	◆	❖	◇	◆	◆	◆	◆	◇
Participation of civil society in 2030 Agenda	◆	❖	◆	❖	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	❖	◆	◆	◆	◆	◇	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	❖	◇	◆	◆	◆	❖	◆
Address HLPF theme and three pillars of sustainable development	◇	◇	◇	◇	◇	◇	◇	◇	◆	❖	❖	❖	◆	◇	◇	◇	◆	◆	◆	◇	◇	❖	◇	◆	◇	◆	◇	❖	◇	◇	◆	◆
Reference to specific groups and/or populations	❖	◇	◇	◆	◆	◇	◇	❖	◇	◆	◇	◇	◇	◇	◇	◆	◆	◆	❖	❖	◇	◆	◆	◆	◇	◆	◇	◆	◇	◇	❖	❖
Gaps and challenges in implementation	❖	❖	❖	◆	◆	◇	◆	◆	◆	◆	◇	◇	❖	◇	◆	◇	◆	◇	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◇	◆	◆	◇	◆	◆	◇	◇

Key

Topic addressed in the main messages	◆
Topic only briefly mentioned or not yet implemented	❖
Topic not mentioned	◇

THANK YOU