“Regional Workshop for the Voluntary National Reviews: Leveraging Data to Leave No One Behind”

Associated Event: 11th Asia-Pacific Forum for Sustainable Development

February 19, 09:00-16:30
Meeting Room G, United Nations Conference Center, Bangkok
By invitation only

Organizer: Economic Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)

Background

Voluntary national reviews (VNRs) are an essential part of the follow up and review framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and eleven countries in the Asia-Pacific region will be presenting their VNRs at the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) in 2024. Second and third generation VNRs play a critical part in the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda, by tracking next steps and recommendations from previous reviews and identifying concrete actions to address key challenges in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at country level.

The Preparatory Workshop for the Voluntary National Reviews is an associated event of the Eleventh Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD), organised under the theme: “Reinforcing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and eradicating poverty in times of multiple crises: the effective delivery of sustainable, resilient and innovative solutions in Asia and the Pacific”. The Forum will assess progress towards achieving the SDGs, while also explore diverse perspectives for accelerating transformative action. Furthermore, it will provide an opportunity to exchange knowledge, best practices, and policy solutions to achieve the Goals by 2030.

The workshop is complementary to the main programme of the APFSD which will carry out a comprehensive examination of national, regional, and global aspects of the follow-up and review processes, including the VNRs, to identify forward-looking policies and actions to accelerate SDG implementation in the lead-up to the Summit of the Future, to be held in New York in September 2024.

The workshop will provide a platform for participating member States to support each other in the development of their VNRs and it will be an opportunity to identify and discuss common challenges, as well as to receive technical support on VNR preparation. The workshop will feature dedicated sessions on strengthening the data and statistics aspects of progress
narratives in VNRs and showcase best practices in mainstreaming results from ESCAP’s Leave No one Behind (LNOB) Platform and National SDG Tracker.

Leaving No One Behind is the central transformative promise of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Availability and analysis of disaggregated data at national and sub-national levels has been insufficient, particularly in the review of the SDGs. To bridge this gap, ESCAP has introduced an innovative and interactive policy platform to quantify inequalities in SDGs and identify individuals and households left furthest behind using nationally representative household surveys.

Following an overview of national progress on the SDGs, this workshop will offer a deep dive into identifying those who are left behind in a variety of SDGs across Asia and the Pacific and showcase how countries have mainstreamed LNOB evidence in their VNRs and informed their national policies to accelerate progress for everyone.

Objective

The objective of the workshop is to strengthen VNRs through peer-learning and technical support and to promote an exchange of experiences and lessons learned among countries in the Asia-Pacific region.

Overall, the workshop aims to:

- Identify challenges, areas of innovation and opportunities to bolster VNR preparations.
- Build confidence and knowledge on the VNR process and timeline.
- Offer a space to share experiences with the VNR process and discuss how best to prepare second and subsequent VNRs.
- Strengthen the statistical background of VNRs with the use of evidence on progress on the SDGs as well as inequalities in SDGs and address the LNOB pledge of the 2030 Agenda.
- Foster capacity building and peer learning by providing technical support on key challenges encountered in the VNR process.
- Connect member States with UN agencies that can provide support in the VNR process.

Format

The workshop will be organized as a hybrid event. It will include plenary sessions with presentations, alternating with interactive and engaging group work.

Participants

Participation is by invitation only.
The workshop will gather SDG and VNR focal points from member States, representatives from ministries in charge of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and representatives from the National Statistical Offices (NSO).

**Information**

For information, please contact Mr. Riccardo Mesiano, Sustainable Development Officer, mesiano@un.org and cc escap-vnr@un.org

**Tentative Agenda**

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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>09:00 - 09:10</td>
<td>Opening and welcome remarks</td>
<td>ESCAP</td>
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| 09:10 - 09:20 | Setting the scene: Objectives and goals of the workshop                  | ESCAP Format: presentation
- Introduction to participants and tour the table.
- Expectations for the meeting.
- Brief overview of programme.
- Ice breaker: Slido polling tool |
| 09:20 - 10:00 | Session 1: How have VNRs evolved throughout the years and what are the expectations for the next generation of VNR reports | UN DESA Format: presentation and Q&A
- How VNRs have evolved and expectations for next VNRs.
- The value and impact of VNRs.
- Promoting concrete post-VNR action.
- Updated VNR guidelines: what’s new.
- Q&A |
<p>| 10:00 - 10:40 | Session 2: Status of 2024 VNR preparations                               | ESCAP Ice-breaker: Slido polling tool Format: plenary discussion with interventions from member States |</p>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Format</th>
<th>Topics for discussion</th>
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<tr>
<td>10:40 - 11:00</td>
<td>Group photo and networking break</td>
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<td>11:00 - 12:00</td>
<td>Session 3: Data and statistics</td>
<td>This session will discuss lessons learned by countries through the VNR process to strengthen SDG data production, coordination, and utilization.</td>
<td>ESCAP</td>
<td>➢ What innovative approaches have you adopted in the VNR process?</td>
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<td>➢ If this is your 2nd, 3rd or 4th VNR, how has your VNR process changed? What have you done differently this time around?</td>
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<td>➢ How are you utilising the VNR as part of your national planning process?</td>
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<td>12:00 - 13:00</td>
<td>Lunch break</td>
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<td>13:00 - 14:00</td>
<td>Session 4: Leaving no one behind</td>
<td>This session will present ESCAP Leave No One Behind (LNOB) Platform and showcase how VNR countries have used LNOB evidence in their reports and collaborated with ESCAP in customizing results to support their stories.</td>
<td>Mr. Selahattin Selsah Pasali, Social Affairs Officer, ESCAP</td>
<td>➢ How has the VNR process contributed to the engagement of national data producers and coordination of SDG data sharing in your country?</td>
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<td>➢ How has the VNR process changed the way SDG data and indicators are used in SDG implementation in your country?</td>
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<td>➢ What plans do you have for disseminating SDG data? And how can the VNR process facilitate better SDG data dissemination?</td>
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<td>14:00 - 14:45</td>
<td>Session 5: LNOB in VNRs</td>
<td>This session will take stock of how VNR 2024 countries report on the LNOB pledge of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development. Following brief interventions by selected VNR 2024 countries on how they are mainstreaming LNOB evidence in their VNRs, participants will engage in group work to reflect on how best they can address the LNOB pledge in their VNRs in 2024 and beyond.</td>
<td>ESCAP</td>
<td>➢ Is your VNR covering all SDGs or only those that are under review in 2024?</td>
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<td>➢ Do you have any survey data available to undertake LNOB analysis on SDGs under review? Which indicators are you emphasizing in your VNRs? Is there LNOB evidence on these indicators?</td>
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<td>14:45 - 15:15</td>
<td><strong>Break</strong></td>
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| 15:15 - 16:15 | **Session 6: Stakeholder engagement for the VNRs** | *This session will discuss how to engage stakeholders in VNR preparation, at the HLPF, and in the post-VNR phase.*  
  - AP-RCEM  
  Format: presentation with interventions from member States  
  Topics for discussion:  
    - Different ways to engage stakeholders in the preparation of a VNR.  
    - Getting and responding to feedback on the drafts of the VNR.  
    - Engaging stakeholders for the HLPF presentation.  
    - Communication and engagement in the post-VNR period.  
  Q&A                                                                 |
| 16:15 - 16:30 | **Wrap up and vote of thanks: Key take aways** | *This session will summarise key points emerged during the discussions and will present future activities on Follow-up and Review.*  
  - ESCAP                                                                 |