



HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

#HLPF #SDGs sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf/2018

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: What is the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development?

- The Forum is a multi-stakeholder platform engaging 197 member states in the exchange of experiences in implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), identifying gaps and lessons learned. It is also a forum for rallying further action and solutions to this end by all stakeholders.
- The Forum seeks to enhance the integration of economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.
- The Forum also provides a platform for the creation of multi-stakeholder partnerships and the promotion of international cooperation as we advance towards achieving the Goals.

Q: Why is the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development important?

- The High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development is the essential global forum for providing political leadership, guidance and recommendations on implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 SDGs, which were unanimously adopted by world leaders in September 2015.
- The Forum provides an opportunity for countries, civil society and businesses to highlight the efforts they are taking to achieve the SDGs, and helps translate the vision of the SDGs into reality by looking at what is working and what is not.
- By serving as a global hub for governments and major groups and stakeholders to exchange ideas and best practices and review progress on the SDGs, the Forum enables countries to accelerate progress toward achieving the goals.

Q: What are the Sustainable Development Goals?

- Three years ago, when member states adopted the SDGs, countries embarked on a journey to achieve a bold, ambitious and historic agenda to promote prosperity while protecting the environment.
- The SDGs—a core feature of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development—reflect a new understanding that development everywhere





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must integrate economic growth, social well-being and environmental protection.

- The list of the 17 SDGs, which contain 169 targets, can be found at <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>
- The SDGs offer the most practical and effective pathway to address the causes of violent conflict, human rights abuses, climate change and environmental degradation

Q: How will the SDGs be achieved?

- The successful implementation of the SDGs relies on countries' own sustainable development policies, plans and programmes, and are led by countries. Leaders agreed to develop ambitious responses to the 2030 Agenda.
- Governments also have the primary responsibility for follow-up and review, at the national, regional and global levels, in relation to the progress made in implementing the SDGs.
- Governments continue to develop national indicators to assist in monitoring progress made on the goals and targets, taking into account the global indicator framework.
- The mobilization of resources at both the domestic and international levels is essential to achieve the goals.
- The follow-up and review process at the global level is undertaken by the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and supported by an annual SDGs Report that is prepared by the United Nations Secretary-General.

Q: In the three years since the SDGs were adopted, what actions has the international community taken to achieve the Goals?

- Many governments from both developed and developing countries have aligned the SDGs with national policies and strategies, conducting seminars, conferences and campaigns to raise awareness and catalyze action among local governments, civil society, businesses, academia, media and other



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groups. By 2018, a total of 108 countries had national policies and initiatives relevant to sustainable consumption.

- Many businesses have integrated the SDGs into their companies' practices and invested in new technology.
- Civil society organizations continue to build momentum, developing initiatives at the local level.

Q: Has there been progress in achieving the SDGs?

- Globally, from 2000 to 2016, the under-five mortality rate dropped 47 per cent, and the total number of under-five deaths dropped from 9.9 million to 5.6 million.
- Since 2000, the maternal mortality ratio in sub-Saharan Africa has been reduced by 35 per cent and the under-five mortality rate has dropped by 50 per cent.
- In Southern Asia, a girl's risk of marrying in childhood has declined by over 40 per cent.
- The absolute number of people living without electricity dipped below the symbolic threshold of one billion.
- In the least developed countries, the proportion of the population with access to electricity has more than doubled from 2000 to 2016.

Q: Where have there been setbacks?

- After a prolonged decline, world hunger appears to be on the rise again: the number of undernourished people rose from 777 million in 2015 to 815 million in 2016, mainly as a result of conflicts, drought and disasters linked to climate change.
- In 2017, economic losses attributed to disasters were estimated at over \$300 billion, among the highest losses in past years, largely due to the costliest North Atlantic hurricane season on record. And the past 5-year average global temperature is the highest on record.
- While the extreme poverty rate in 2013 was a third of the 1990 value, there are pockets of the world where it stubbornly persists: 783 million people still lived below \$1.90 (2011 PPP), with more than half living in sub-Saharan Africa and about one-third living in Southern Asia.



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- The world is not on a trajectory towards ending malaria by 2030— In 2016, there were 216 million cases of malaria, compared to 210 million cases in 2013.
- More than half of all children and adolescents are not meeting minimum proficiencies in reading and mathematics.
- In 2015, 6 in 10 people lacked access to safely managed sanitation services.

Q: How does the Forum guide progress on the SDGs?

- The Forum allows for a participatory, transparent and integrated follow-up and review platform at the global level that will help countries to learn from one another and maximize and track progress in implementing the Goals to ensure that no one is left behind.
- At the Forum, countries present the progress and obstacles they face in implementing the Goals.
- The Forum helps translate the vision of the Goals into reality by providing political leadership and recommendations and sharing experiences and lessons learned.
- The Forum brings together Member States, UN system, civil society, NGOs, the private sector and other stakeholders to discuss progress and review successes.
- The Forum creates an opportunity to showcase and develop multi-stakeholder partnerships around the SDGs.

Q: What will be the focus of the Forum this year?

- This year's Forum, which takes place between 9-18 July at United Nations Headquarters in New York, has as its theme, "*Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies*".
- A set of Goals will be reviewed in depth:
 - Goal 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
 - Goal 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all
 - Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable



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- Goal 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
- Goal 15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss
- Goal 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development. This goal is reviewed yearly.

Q: Who will be attending the Forum?

- Ministers from both developed and developing countries will present their review of their national efforts for implementing the SDGs.
- Civil society, the private sector, academia and other stakeholders will attend and provide major inputs at the Forum.

Q: Which countries are presenting their reviews this year?

- This year, 47 countries, both developed and developing, will be presenting their voluntary national reviews. They are: Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Australia, Bahamas, Bahrain, Benin, Bhutan, Cabo Verde, Canada, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Greece, Guinea, Hungary, Ireland, Jamaica, Kiribati, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lithuania, Mali, Malta, Mexico, Namibia, Niger, Paraguay, Poland, Qatar, Republic of Congo, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, Slovakia, Spain, Sri Lanka, State of Palestine, Sudan, Switzerland, Togo, United Arab Emirates, Uruguay, and Viet Nam.
- Their reviews may be found at <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf/inputs>

Q: How many countries have presented their review up to this date?

- Since 2016 which marks the first-time countries presented their plans to achieve the SDGs, there were 112 VNRs presented.

Q: Why are these reviews significant?

- These reviews are voluntary and demonstrate the commitment of countries to mobilize efforts towards achieving the Goals.



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- Reviews generate a process of reflection and consultation at the national level which builds understanding of progress and can improve policies, coordination and correlations.
- Reviews by countries at the Forum provide the opportunity to learn from each other, mobilize support to overcome shared challenges, identify new and emerging issues and provide recommendations for implementing the Goals.
- The presentation of reviews is a peer learning experience and can spur further action to implement the SDGs.
- Success in achieving the SDGs will help to address some of the most pressing global challenges, such as climate change, providing a better life for women and men and building a firm foundation for stability and peace in all societies, everywhere.

Q: What is sustainable development?

- Sustainable development seeks to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Sustainable development calls for concerted efforts towards building an inclusive, sustainable and resilient future for people and planet.
- Ending poverty, reducing inequalities and combatting climate change are indispensable requirements for the achievement of sustainable development.
- The 2030 Agenda addresses the interlinkages between the social, economic, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development, since a holistic approach that incorporates these three elements is essential if we are to achieve sustainable development.