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# VNR LABS

## HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM

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Concept note:

**Follow-up to the VNRs: Accelerating Implementation**  
**Friday 12 July 2019, 8:00 – 9:00 am, S-2726/27**

The voluntary national reviews (VNRs) aim to facilitate the sharing of experiences, including successes, challenges and lessons learned, with a view to accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The VNRs also seek to strengthen policies and institutions of governments and mobilize multi-stakeholder support and partnerships for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. The process of carrying out the voluntary national review should not be seen as separate from implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Rather than being an end in itself, the VNR is a process by which countries take stock of and assess progress and shortcomings in implementation of the goals and targets. This process is a cyclical and dynamic one wherein countries are constantly implementing, assessing and readjusting their policies to achieve the goals. The true benefit of the VNRs are to be seen after the presentation at the HLPF in national implementation strategies.

By 2019, over 140 countries would have presented VNRs at the HLPF, with several countries having presented a second or third report. In the next years, 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> VNRs will increasingly be to predominate. Some second, third and subsequent VNRs share insights into experiences with national follow-up and have examined what new initiatives have been undertaken since the last round; amendments or review of national plans, policies and programmes; how challenges, including persistent challenges, are being addressed; and how good practices and lessons learned are being integrated into laws, policies and programmes. Subsequent VNRs could report on the impacts of their previous VNRs on SDG implementation and follow-up of initiatives outlined in their first VNR.

Second, third and subsequent VNRs have also helped to produce increasingly more nuanced, detailed and targeted national policies. These VNRs have reported on steps countries have taken to follow-up after the first HLPF process. This has included information such as wide dissemination of the VNRs, including simplification and translation to local languages; presentation of reports to parliament; domestic incorporation of good practices learned through the VNR preparation and presentation processes; debriefing cabinet meetings to plan ahead; and audits in assessing SDG preparedness and implementation, including by Supreme Audit Institutions. Some countries will provide annual national reports on SDG implementation to parliament, but will produce VNRs less frequently.

Some of the questions that this VNR Lab will address are: What happens after a VNR is presented? How do countries identify and translate the gaps, challenges and recommendations identified in the context of the VNRs into actionable and effective solutions for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda? What challenges do national governments face in following up and how do national policies, plans and structures evolve? Should there be changes to the 2<sup>nd</sup> and subsequent reporting patterns? Should the

Secretary-General's guidelines for voluntary national reports be updated to include guidelines on the preparation of subsequent VNRs? How will sharing experience amongst peer countries more actively in regional and global contexts help? How can reports be clearer and more coherent on their follow-up plans?

**Speakers:**

- **Mr. Gottfried von Gemmingen**, Head of Unit, 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Reducing Poverty and Inequality, Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), Germany
- **Ms. Yolanda Martinez Lopez**, Secretary of Social and Human Development, Ministry of Social and Human Development of Oaxaca, Mexico
- **Mr. Bayu Wardhana**, Head of Broadcasting Division of the Alliance of Independent Journalists (AJI), Indonesia

**Moderator:**

- **Ms. Marianne Beisheim**, German Institute for International and Security Affairs, Berlin

This VNR Lab is organised by Partners for Review, a transnational multi-stakeholder network for a robust review process of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Division for Sustainable Development Goals in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs