

CONCEPT NOTE

HIGH LEVEL PANEL

SDGs FROM CITIES' PERSPECTIVES

Achievements and challenges for the elaboration of Voluntary Local Reviews in local governments in Latin America (Virtual Format)

Thursday, July 8 2021

12:00 p.m. Peru, Ecuador, Panama, Colombia Time.

Side Event

High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development

New York

CONTEXT

The High Level Political Forum is the main United Nations platform regarding sustainable development and plays a central role in the monitoring and review of the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#) and the [Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#) worldwide.¹

The event this 2021 will be held from Tuesday, July 6 to Thursday, July 15 of 2021, with the support of the [Economic and Social Council](#). This year's theme will be "Sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic that promotes the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development: building an inclusive and effective path for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda in the context of the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development". With special relevance to the SDGs: 1, 2, 3, 8, 10, 12, 13, 16 and 17.

In this framework of activities, the [Metropolitan Municipality of Lima](#) is organizing and coordinating a High Level Panel for Mayors of Latin American cities, who will share their experiences, lessons learned and ongoing processes in their various city commitments with the SDGs through the construction, implementation and monitoring of their Voluntary Local Reviews.

BACKGROUND

Each year, the local governments' role in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the localization of the Sustainable Development Goals becomes more evident. In 2015, it was estimated that at least 65% of the SDG targets **could not be achieved if local urban stakeholders are not engaged and involved** in the implementation process of the 2030 Agenda.²

With the purpose of analyzing and presenting the advancements and challenges of local governments in the consecution of the 2030 Agenda, the **Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs)** are born. These are city documents that demonstrate the interest and commitment to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Agenda, and

¹ [The 70/299 General Assembly Resolution](#) provides further guidance on the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.

² Cities Alliance, "Sustainable Development Goals and Habitat III: Opportunities for a Successful New Urban Agenda," Cities Alliance Discussion Paper 3, no. 36 (2015): 13.



every day more and more local governments decide to incorporate the SDGs in their planning instruments, seeking to provide better services and reduce the existing gaps in their territories.

In addition to being a tool for analyzing and communicating their progress in achieving the SDGs, **the Voluntary Local Reviews are a statement of local governments' aspirations, commitments, and priorities.** They also present an opportunity to share and learn from other cities and local governments.

Since 2018, the Local and Regional Governments Forums organized under the umbrella of the High Level Political Forum have allowed the **Voluntary Local Reviews to be seen as a key method for the appropriation of the 2030 Agenda at a local level.** After the presentation of the first VLR in New York to the United Nations, many cities decided to sign in 2019 a Declaration committing to:

- Submit Voluntary Local Reviews to the United Nations.
- Identify how strategies, programs, data and local goals can align to the Sustainable Development Goals.
- Organize spaces to share experiences and good practices related to the SDGs between local governments.

Until 2020, more than 40 cities and regions have presented Voluntary Local Reviews³ worldwide. **In the Latin American region, Buenos Aires, Montevideo, Mexico, and La Paz** are the capital cities that have submitted their VLRs.⁴

The Latin American region reunites 22 capital cities, adding up to a population of approximately 90 million inhabitants, who have been severely affected by the current global situation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In this context, the emergency has motivated a stronger implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the elaboration of Voluntary Local Reviews, with the goal of building resilient societies with less inequalities.

Additionally, governments in the region, both national and sub-national, are encouraged to adopt measures to address the COVID-19 pandemic and economic and social recovery that are focused on sustainable development and respect for human rights, strengthening the protection of vulnerable populations.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Side Event / Mayors Panel, under the umbrella of the High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development 2021, will be to create a space for meeting and dialogue between emblematic Ibero-American cities committed to the Sustainable Development Goals from their local policies, committed to the implementation of inclusive processes for the benefit of the population, facing from their role of local governance the urban challenges and challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Cities that are in the process of preparing or have successfully prepared their Voluntary Local Reviews will be invited. On this occasion, Mayors will be invited as main spokespersons from the cities of **Bogota, Buenos Aires, Lima, Madrid, Montevideo and Rio de Janeiro.**

³ Information provided by the United Nations Development Program - UNDP Peru.

⁴ List of VLRs submitted to the UN: <https://qs.un.org/topics/voluntary-local-reviews>





SPECIFIC GOALS

- Reunite emblematic cities that are currently in different stages of elaboration of their Voluntary Local Reviews.
- Promote the exchange of horizontal knowledge and cooperative work between cities for the elaboration of the Voluntary Local Review.
- Acknowledge the challenges in the process of elaboration of the VLR and in the institutional practices for its identification, development, and implementation.
- Agree on a public commitment from local governments to promote the implementation of local public policies with a perspective aligned to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

METHODOLOGY

- The event will be held in **virtual** format, due to the current context, and will last 1 hour and 30 minutes composed of the presentation and exchange segments.
- The **Panel will be integrated by Mayors** from the different emblematic Latin American cities.
- There will be final comments by representatives of **civil society, academia and private sector**.

GUIDING QUESTIONS:

The SDGs have not only generated a greater thematic visibility but have become a driver and incentive for the implementation of local public policies regarding water, energy, climate, oceans, urbanization, transportation, science, and technology, among others. As a part of its monitoring and review mechanisms, the 2030 Agenda encourages member States to "conduct regular and inclusive reviews of progress at the national and sub-national levels". In this framework, States and local governments are encouraged to not only work towards the [SDG 11: building of sustainable cities and communities](#), but also elaborate Reviews, which must be voluntary, drafted by countries and sub-national governments, developed or developing, in the best spirit and commitment to leave no one behind in these integral and equitable processes for the cities' integrated development in benefit of their citizens. In this sense, the High Level Mayor Panel will create an open dialogue regarding:

- What actions can be undertaken by Latin American cities and local governments to ensure the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030? Focusing on community and inclusive solutions, promoting development processes with a citizen-centered vision.
- How does the Voluntary Local Review impact the local public policy of your city? How does it contribute to institutionalize the commitments around [SDG 11](#) for safe, inclusive and accessible public spaces, particularly for women, children, senior citizens and people with disabilities?
- COVID-19 is threatening cities and communities, endangering not only public health but also society and the economy. How has it impacted in the process of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda at a local level?





PROGRAMME

Thursday, July 8, 2021

12.00pm *Peru, Ecuador, Panama, Colombia Time*

- | | |
|--------|---|
| 15 min | Relevance of the Voluntary Local Review in the cities' commitments <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Linda Maguire
UNDP Regional Sub Director for Latin America and the Caribbean• Igor Garafulic
Resident Coordinator for the United Nations in Peru |
| 20 min | Local challenges in the formulations of the VLR <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Claudia López
Mayor of Bogota• Jorge Muñoz Wells
Mayor of Lima• José Luis Martínez Almeida
Mayor of Madrid |
| 20 min | Implementation of local public policies and VLR / SDGs <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Carolina Cosse (*)
Intendant of Montevideo• Horacio Rodríguez Larreta (*)
Chief of Government of the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires• Eduardo Paes
Mayor of Rio de Janeiro |
| 20 min | Final Comments <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Carla Zacapa
UNDP Deputy Representative for Peru• Andrea Pradilla
GRI Hispanic America Director• Alessandra Nilo
Grupo de Trabalho da Sociedade Civil para a Agenda 2030 de Brasil• Lina Muñoz Ávila
University of Rosario of Bogotá – Max Planck Institute |
| 10 min | Conclusions and Commitments |

(*) Pre- confirmed

