

**THE DANISH
INSTITUTE FOR
HUMAN RIGHTS**

**HUMAN RIGHTS AND
THE 2030 AGENDA
FOR SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT**

LESSONS LEARNED
AND NEXT STEPS



The Report is informed by analysis on human rights and the 2030 Agenda by the Danish Institute for Human Rights, builds on data from the Universal Human Rights Index of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, as well as discussions from the Satigny Meeting (June 2017) organised by the Group of Friends on Human Rights and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.¹

The Report was compiled by Nadja Filskov and Birgitte Feiring with input and guidance from Eva Grambye.

The Report was elaborated and published with the support of the Permanent Mission of Denmark to the United Nations in Geneva.



**PERMANENT MISSION
OF DENMARK TO THE UNITED
NATIONS IN GENEVA**

© 2018 The Danish Institute for Human Rights
Denmark's National Human Rights Institution
Wilders Plads 8K
DK-1403 Copenhagen K
Phone +45 3269 8888
www.humanrights.dk

Provided such reproduction is for non-commercial use, this publication, or parts of it, may be reproduced if author and source are quoted.

1. Read more about the Satigny meeting in *Human Rights & SDGs – Pursuing synergies*, the Danish Institute for Human Rights, the Permanent Missions of Denmark and Chile to the United Nations in Geneva, Universal Rights Group, 2017: <http://bit.ly/2yFxdM>

Contents

KEY MESSAGES	4
HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE 2030 AGENDA	6
The main elements of the 2030 agenda	6
Why are human rights important for the 2030 agenda?	7
Why is the 2030 Agenda important for human rights?	8
Integrated approaches	8
LINKING HUMAN RIGHTS INSTRUMENTS TO TARGETS	9
Human rights and the 2030 agenda are interwoven	9
Goal 16: Peace, justice and strong institutions	10
Spotlight on concrete linkages between human rights and SDGs	10
Tool for linking SDG targets and human rights instruments	10
THE HUMAN RIGHTS GUIDE TO THE SDGs – A SEARCHABLE DATABASE	11
Linkages between sdg targets and the right to access for persons with disabilities	12
Linkages between target 8.7 (Forced labour) and selected international human rights and labour instruments	12
EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION	14
FOLLOW-UP AND REVIEW	16
A human rights-based approach to follow-up and review	16
Regional and international for UMS for follow up and review	16
Voluntary national reviews	18
2018 Guidelines for voluntary national reviews	19
LESSONS LEARNED: Accountability	20
NEXT STEPS - Accountability	21
Unpacking information from human rights mechanisms	24
National Mechanisms for Implementation, Reporting and Follow-up	27
HOW TO RECYCLE REPORTING	30
LESSONS LEARNED: Inclusive, participatory, transparent processes	32
NEXT STEPS: inclusive, participatory, transparent processes	35
National Human Rights Institutions as accountability mechanisms	35
LESSONS LEARNED: focus on those furthest behind	38
Status and situation of vulnerable groups	38
Data disaggregation and alternative data sources, such as citizen-generated data	42
NEXT STEPS: focus on those furthest behind	43
Alternative data sources	43
A pluralistic ecosystem of data	44
LESSONS LEARNED: The 2030 agenda in the human rights system	45
Mainstreaming human rights	45
The Human Rights Council and Sustainable Development	45
Proposed actions for the Human Rights Council to integrate the 2030 Agenda into its work	47
NEXT STEPS: UN system contribution to a human rights-based approach to sustainable development	51
The human rights council as a platform for sharing experiences	51
Mainstreaming human rights and SDGs in UN development operations and Country Teams	51

KEY MESSAGES

KEY MESSAGES	WHERE TO READ MORE
<p>Human rights and the 2030 Agenda are tied together in a mutually-reinforcing way. This convergence creates a number of operational opportunities for pursuing integrated approaches to implementation and monitoring.</p>	<p>Page 6</p>
<p>More than 90% of the 169 SDG targets reflect core international human rights and labour standards. Concrete linkages between specific SDG targets and specific articles of core international human rights instruments illustrate how closely linked these are.</p>	<p>Page 9</p>
<p>The cross-cutting principle of “leaving no one behind” is one of the most transformative elements of the 2030 Agenda and strongly reflects the human rights principles of equality and non-discrimination.</p>	<p>Page 11</p>
<p>Follow-up and Review (FUR) mechanisms aim to track progress in implementing the 2030 Agenda. In order for FUR mechanisms to be effective and leave no one behind, the principles of accountability, participation and non-discrimination are strongly emphasized in the 2030 Agenda. These reflect the principles of a Human Rights-Based Approach to Development, and should guide both the design and the operationalization of FUR mechanisms.</p>	<p>Page 16</p>
<p>Human rights mechanisms and institutions can make systematic and invaluable contributions to the global and regional platforms for follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda: the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) and the Regional Forums for Sustainable Development (RFSDs).</p>	<p>Page 17</p>

<p>From a human rights perspective, the most significant lessons learned from the Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) revolve around the importance of:</p> <p>Accountability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The reporting on each SDG and on cross-cutting human rights issues can be informed by existing human rights reporting. Simple steps show how States can recycle their human rights reporting in VNRs. • Accountability should be for all actors involved in SDG financing and implementation, including the private sector. <p>Inclusive, participatory, transparent processes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broad participation, including of vulnerable and marginalized groups, is crucial if the 2030 Agenda should “leave no one behind”. <p>Focus on those furthest behind, including through disaggregation of data</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disaggregated data and inclusion of alternative data sources in VNR are crucial for systematic assessment of the status and situation of groups at risk of being left behind 	<p>Page 20</p>
<p>Using the analysis, data and recommendations of existing human rights mechanisms for Follow-up and Review will enhance efficiency, coherence and accountability. Relevant mechanisms and institutions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Universal Periodic Review (UPR), the Special Procedures and the Treaty Bodies; and National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs). • National Mechanisms for Implementation, Reporting and Follow-up (NMRFs) can facilitate integrated reporting and follow-up on the implementation of human rights and sustainable development. 	<p>Page 21</p>
<p>Addressing the 2030 Agenda throughout the work of the Human Rights Council (HRC) and that of its mechanisms can provide a substantial contribution to the understanding and institutionalization of integrated human rights-based approaches to achieve the 2030 Agenda.</p>	<p>Page 45</p>
<p>It is crucial to support the implementation of both human rights and the SDGs through UN operations on the ground. Some of the key actors in this regard are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR); • The UN Development Group (UNDG); • The UN Development Programme (UNDP); and • UN Country Teams (UNCTs). 	<p>Page 51</p>

HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE 2030 AGENDA

THE MAIN ELEMENTS OF THE 2030 AGENDA

In September 2015, the UN General Assembly unanimously adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.²

The adoption marked the end of a multi-stakeholder process that was unique in length, complexity and inclusiveness. The 2030 Agenda provides a comprehensive and universal framework, uniting the environmental, social and economic dimensions of sustainable development.

THE 2030 AGENDA COMPRISES THREE MAIN ELEMENTS:

- The **17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** and 169 targets to be achieved by all countries by 2030
- The **Means of Implementation (Mol)**, which specify the resources and partnerships that are necessary to reach the agreed goals and targets
- The **Follow-Up and Review (FUR)** processes and mechanisms that will monitor and guide the implementation, including the **global indicators framework**

The Agenda is the result of an unprecedented consensus, and provides UN member states, civil society and businesses with a unique agreement of interconnectedness, and a universal roadmap for change, including renewed commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights.

2. UN General Assembly, 21 October 2015, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, A/RES/70/1: <http://undocs.org/A/RES/70/1>

WHY ARE HUMAN RIGHTS IMPORTANT FOR THE 2030 AGENDA?

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development affirms that the SDGs “seek to realize the human rights of all”³, and the vast majority of the targets reflect provisions of international human rights instruments. Thus, the 2030 Agenda and human rights are tied together in a mutually-reinforcing way.

Operationally, this generates a number of opportunities: human rights norms and mechanisms offer guidance for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, as it is underpinned by legally-binding human rights treaties. For example, human rights norms and institutions can constitute a bulwark against incoherent and unequal progress, and ensure accountability in the implementation of the SDGs.

KEY UN DOCUMENTS ON THE 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Outcome Document for the 2030 Agenda:

UN General Assembly, 21 October 2015, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, A/RES/70/1:

<http://undocs.org/A/RES/70/1>

Follow-up and review:

UN General Assembly, 29 July 2016, *Follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the global level*, A/RES/70/299:

<http://undocs.org/A/RES/70/299>

3. A/RES/70/1: <http://undocs.org/A/RES/70/1>

WHY IS THE 2030 AGENDA IMPORTANT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS?

Without subjugating the human rights agenda to the 2030 Agenda, the SDGs can be seen as an operational plan for realizing human rights. Furthermore, the 2030 Agenda addresses some of the burning issues of our time, for example, climate change and the pollution of oceans, which impact human rights, but are mainly addressed in instruments and processes originating outside the human rights system. As expressed by the President of the Human Rights Council⁴:

“I believe that the question of how States can respect, protect and fulfil human rights within their implementation efforts towards the 2030 Agenda can also be inverted in the sense that the fulfilment of the Sustainable Development Goals has a positive impact on human rights. That is to say, greater levels of development can lead towards greater levels of achievement of human rights.”

H.E. Mr Joaquín Alexander Maza Martelli,
11th President of the Human Rights Council
Satigny, June 2017

INTEGRATED APPROACHES

Integrated approaches to realizing the interwoven frameworks of human rights and sustainable development have clear benefits, and enhance prioritisation, coherence, efficiency, participation and inclusion, as well as accountability. However, many government institutions, UN agencies, national human rights institutions, civil society, businesses and other stakeholders are looking for operational guidance on how to devise such integrated strategies and approaches. In order to guide implementation, three main questions need to be answered:

- **What are the concrete linkages between human rights and the 2030 Agenda?**
- **What are the next steps for human rights institutions and mechanisms to contribute to the realisation of the 2030 Agenda?**
- **How can the 2030 Agenda most effectively contribute to the realisation of human rights?**

Two years into implementation of the 2030 Agenda, there are tools, good practice and emerging lessons learned, which can help answer these questions. These are presented in subsequent sections.

4. Statement at Event on Human rights and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, June 2017: <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/MDGs/Post2015/Contribution2016HLPF.pdf>

LINKING HUMAN RIGHTS INSTRUMENTS TO TARGETS

HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE 2030 AGENDA ARE INTERWOVEN

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is grounded in human rights. The Agenda explicitly references the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and international human rights treaties throughout its text, and is informed by other instruments such as the Declaration on the Right to Development. Furthermore, the Agenda states that the SDGs “seek to realize the human rights of all”.⁵

The 17 SDGs directly or indirectly reflect human rights standards. When analyzing the concrete human rights anchorage of each SDG and its corresponding targets, an interrelated web appears: the vast majority of the 169 targets are linked to core international human rights and labour standards.⁶ In other words, the 2030 Agenda and human rights are interwoven and inextricably tied together.⁷

92%

of the 169 SDG targets are linked to international human rights instruments

See how at: <http://sdg.humanrights.dk/>

THE 9 CORE INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS INSTRUMENTS



5 A/RES/70/1: <http://undocs.org/A/RES/70/1>

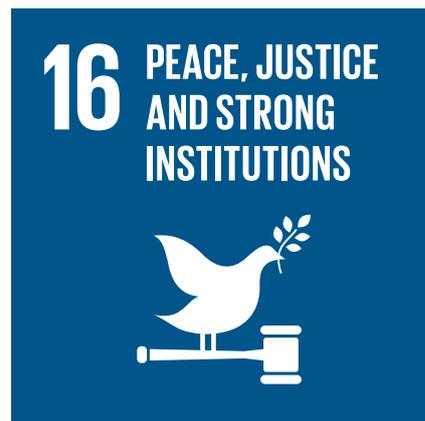
6. See The Human Rights Guide to the SDGs, the Danish Institute for Human Rights: <http://sdg.humanrights.dk/>

7. OHCHR, 2015, Human Rights in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/MDGs/Post2015/HRAndPost2015.pdf>

GOAL 16: PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

In addition to the human rights features that permeate the 2030 Agenda horizontally, some of the SDGs also encourage a vertical realisation of human rights. In particular, SDG 16 (“Peace, justice and strong institutions”) offers significant transformative potential to improve human rights through institutional, justice and security reform.

SDG 16 covers many dimensions of civil and political rights, including personal security, access to justice, and “fundamental freedoms”.⁸ Strengthening these dimensions and working with governments to implement lasting change through strong institutions is an intrinsic element of sustainable development.



SPOTLIGHT ON CONCRETE LINKAGES BETWEEN HUMAN RIGHTS AND SDGs

The following pages show examples of how specific SDG targets are linked to core international human rights instruments, such as the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). This serves to illustrate how closely linked the SDGs are with human rights, even at target and article level.⁸ These linkages are the starting point for:

- Supporting state actors, rights-holders and other development partners in identifying human rights standards and principles of relevance to their SDG work;
- Ensuring accountability in implementing the 2030 Agenda by developing integrated implementation strategies and action plans to realise the SDGs and human rights of all;
- Promoting inclusive, transparent and participatory implementation processes of the SDGs, contextualising these approaches to the needs and rights of particular rights-holders; and
- Identifying existing data sources that can guide and monitor SDG implementation.

TOOL FOR LINKING SDG TARGETS AND HUMAN RIGHTS INSTRUMENTS

The Human Rights Guide to the SDGs is an on-line database in 7 languages which shows the concrete links between the 169 targets and the relevant range of:

- International and regional human rights instruments;
- International labour standards; and
- Key environmental instruments - some of which have human rights dimensions.

8. OHCHR: <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/MDGs/Post2015/HRAndPost2015.pdf>

9. The analysis is based on information from the *Human Rights Guide to the SDGs*: <http://sdg.humanrights.dk/>

THE HUMAN RIGHTS GUIDE TO THE SDGs – A SEARCHABLE DATABASE



The **Human Rights Guide** to the SDGs identifies the linkages between the SDGs and universal human rights, labour standards and key environmental instruments, and thereby illustrates and reaffirms that human rights instruments and the 2030 Agenda are tied together in a mutually-reinforcing way. The Guide is an essential tool to:

- Understand the links between human rights and the SDGs; and
- Develop a human rights-based approach to sustainable development programming, implementation, reporting and monitoring.

The Guide is developed by
the **Danish Institute for Human Rights**

Visit the Guide at:

[HTTP://SDG.HUMANRIGHTS.DK/](http://sdg.humanrights.dk/)

LINKAGES BETWEEN SDG TARGETS AND THE RIGHT TO ACCESS FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

UN CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES (CRPD)



Article 9.1.a

To enable persons with disabilities to live independently and participate fully in all aspects of life, States Parties shall take appropriate measures to ensure to persons with disabilities access, on an equal basis with others, to the physical environment, to transportation, to information and communications, including information and communications technologies and systems, and to other facilities and services open or provided to the public, both in urban and in rural areas. These measures, which shall include the identification and elimination of obstacles and barriers to accessibility, shall apply to, inter alia:

- a) Buildings, roads, transportation and other indoor and outdoor facilities, including schools, housing, medical facilities and workplaces; [...]

SDG TARGETS



Target 4.a

Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all.



Target 9.1

Develop quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure, including regional and transborder infrastructure, to support economic development and human well-being, with a focus on affordable and equitable access for all.



Target 11.2

By 2030, provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons.

(Other relevant targets: 11.1, 11.7)

LINKAGES BETWEEN TARGET 8.7 (FORCED LABOUR) AND SELECTED INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS AND LABOUR INSTRUMENTS

SDG TARGET 8.7



Target 8.7

Take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labour in all its forms.

INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS INSTRUMENTS AND LABOUR STANDARDS

UN CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD (CRC)

Article 32.1

States Parties recognize the right of the child to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child's education, or to be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development.

Article 32.2

States Parties shall take legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to ensure the implementation of the present article. To this end, and having regard to the relevant provisions of other international instruments, States Parties shall in particular:

- a) Provide for a minimum age or minimum ages for admission to employment;
- b) Provide for appropriate regulation of the hours and conditions of employment;
- c) Provide for appropriate penalties or other sanctions to ensure the effective enforcement of the present article.

UN CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN (CEDAW)

Article 6

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures, including legislation, to suppress all forms of traffic in women and exploitation of prostitution of women.

ILO CONVENTIONS ON FORCED LABOUR

ILO Convention No. 29 is a fundamental convention that requires States to suppress the use of forced or compulsory labour in all its forms within the shortest possible period. ILO Convention No. 105 is also a fundamental Convention that requires States to take effective measures to secure the immediate and complete abolition of forced and compulsory labour.

Other instruments that include articles corresponding to target 8.7:

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESR), International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (ICRMW) and more.¹⁰

10. See *The Human Rights Guide to the SDGs* for more human rights instruments that link with target 8.7: <http://sdg.humanrights.dk/>

EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

“As we embark on this great collective journey, we pledge that no one will be left behind. Recognizing that the dignity of the human person is fundamental, we wish to see the Goals and targets met for all nations and peoples and for all segments of society. And we will endeavour to reach the furthest behind first”.

Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, A/RES/70/1

The cross-cutting principle of “leaving no one behind” is one of the most transformative elements of the 2030 Agenda and strongly reflects the human rights principles of equality and non-discrimination.

By aiming to “leave no one behind” and to “reach the furthest behind first”, the 2030 Agenda clearly commits to combating discrimination and inequalities and ensure progress across all groups of society. These principles have the potential to overcome some of the gaps left by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)¹¹, which, despite progress in reducing extreme poverty rates globally, neglected some of the poorest and most marginalized groups.

The 2030 Agenda comprises specific Goals and targets that focus on inequalities and discrimination: Goal 5 calls for gender equality, Goal 10 focuses on reducing inequalities within and among countries. Specific targets, including 5.c, 10.3 and 16.b, emphasize the need to promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws.

SEE OHCHR PUBLICATION:

Integrating Human Rights into the Post-2015 Development Agenda: Addressing inequalities and discrimination in the SDGs (2015):

<http://bit.ly/2zHGnUX>

11. See: <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>

SDG TARGETS ON PROMOTION AND ENFORCEMENT OF NON-DISCRIMINATORY LEGISLATION

16.b Promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development



10.3 Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action in this regard



5.c. Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels.



Whether the SDGs will indeed “leave no one behind” depends ultimately on the national implementation review processes. In this regard, human rights principles regarding equality, non-discrimination, and participation and accountability provide a framework for translating the commitments of the 2030 Agenda into reality in diverse country contexts. Adhering to these principles ensures that the promotion of sustainability will address diversity and accommodate the rights of marginalized and vulnerable groups such as indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, women, LGBTQI, migrant workers, children etc.¹²

LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND BY ENSURING INCLUSIVE, PARTICIPATORY SDG PROCESSES

Whereas the MDGs were defined without public consultations, the consultation process for the 2030 Agenda was characterised by broad participation from Major Groups and other stakeholders (MGoS).¹³ In order to ensure that inclusion and participation continue to be at the heart of the 2030 Agenda, States must strive for full civil society participation and ensure the inclusion of marginalized, disempowered and excluded groups in the different stages of the planning, implementation and follow-up of the SDGs.

12. Read more about the SDGs, Inequality and Discrimination in this special issue of the International Journal of Human Rights Volume 21, 2017 - Issue 8: Special Issue: *The Sustainable Development Goals and Human Rights: A Critical Early Review*: <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13642987.2017.1348702>

13. Read more about Major Groups and other stakeholders: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/mgos>

FOLLOW-UP AND REVIEW

Achieving effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda depends significantly on the Follow-up and Review (FUR) of the Agenda. The overall purpose of FUR mechanisms is to maximize and track progress in implementing the 2030 Agenda and its 17 SDGs, and ensure that no one is left behind.

A HUMAN RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH TO FOLLOW-UP AND REVIEW

The principles of accountability, participation and non-discrimination are at the core of the Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA) to development. These same principles are also strongly emphasized in the 2030 Agenda, which stipulates that FUR mechanisms should:

- Promote respect for human rights and accountability to citizens;
- Have a particular focus on vulnerable groups and those furthest behind;
- Ensure inclusion, participation, and transparency; and
- Generate data, which is high-quality, accessible, timely, reliable and disaggregated by income, sex, age, race, ethnicity, migration status, disability and geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts.

These principles should guide both the design and the operationalization of FUR mechanisms.

The 2030 Agenda emphasizes the role of the business sector in achieving the SDGs, and Goal 17 speaks of revitalizing global partnerships for sustainable development, including public-private partnerships. For business to make such positive contribution, international human rights and labour standards must be respected and protected, in line with the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

See: A/RES/70/1, para. 67, and Working Group on Business and Human Rights, *“The business and human rights dimension of sustainable development: Embedding “Protect, Respect and Remedy” in SDGs implementation”*: http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Business/Session18/InfoNoteWGBHR_SDGRecommendations.pdf

REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL FORUMS FOR FOLLOW UP AND REVIEW

The main global and regional platforms for follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda are the **High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF)**, and the **Regional Forums for Sustainable Development (RFSDs)**.

FOLLOW-UP AND REVIEW FORUMS AT REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEVELS

High-Level Political Forum

At the global level, the main hub for FUR is the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF). The HLPF meets for two weeks annually under the auspices of either the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) or the General Assembly¹⁴. The purpose of the HLPF is to keep track of global progress, provide political leadership and guidance, and address emerging issues.

The HLPF has a central role in overseeing a network of follow-up and review processes of the 2030 Agenda, and is supposed to be the converging point for the range of national, regional, international and thematic processes, mechanisms and institutions that have the potential to contribute to the FUR.¹⁵

An important element of the HLPF is the Voluntary National Review, where countries present their progress and challenges. The HLPF also comprises a thematic review of a cluster of SDGs.

Theme for 2018 HLPF: “Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies”.

Set of goals to be reviewed in depth: 6, 7, 11, 12, 15 (and 17).

Regional Forums for Sustainable Development

The Regional Forums for Sustainable Development (RFSDs) facilitate follow-up and review of the implementation of the Agenda in the different regions, by focusing on peer learning and exchange of best practices.

The UN Regional Commissions convene the RFSDs and provide regional inputs to the HLPF.

Planned 2018 RFSDs:

ECE: 1-2 March, Geneva

ESCAP: 28-30 March, Bangkok

ECLAC: 18-20 April, Santiago

ESCWA: 24-26 April, Lebanon

ECA: 2-4 May, Dakar

KEY UN DOCUMENTS ON THE HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

UN Resolution on HLPF:

UN General Assembly, 9 July 2013, *Format and organizational aspects of the high-level political forum on sustainable development*, A/RES/67/290: <http://undocs.org/a/res/67/290>

Report of the Secretary-General on Follow-up and Review:

UN General Assembly, 15 January 2016, *Critical milestones towards coherent, efficient and inclusive follow-up and review at the global level*, Report of the Secretary-General, A/70/684: <http://undocs.org/en/A/70/684>

14. Every fourth year, the HLPF meet under the auspices of the UN General Assembly (UNGA)

15. A/RES/70/299: <http://undocs.org/A/RES/70/299>

VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REVIEWS

The **Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs)** constitute a key element of the annual HLPF. The VNRs are one of the main mechanisms for keeping track of progress towards the realization of the SDGs.

Since the first VNR presentations at the HLPF in 2016, more than 100 countries have volunteered for the reviews. In 2016, 22 countries presented their VNRs, whereas the participation in 2017 had grown to 43 countries. In 2018, 47 countries have announced their intention to present VNRs at the HLPF. A handful of countries have volunteered twice (Benin, Colombia, Egypt, Mexico, Switzerland and Togo). After the 2018 VNR presentations, more than half (54%) of all UN Member States will have undergone at least one round of review.¹⁶

The VNRs provide an excellent opportunity for states to integrate human rights reporting into national reporting on the 2030 Agenda.

UN SYNTHESIS REPORT OF 2017 VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REVIEWS (VNRs)

UN DESA, November 2017,
Synthesis of Voluntary National Reviews 2017, Report prepared by Division for Sustainable Development (DSD):

<http://bit.ly/2hIPMNO>

THE UN MEASURING PROGRESS BASED ON GLOBAL INDICATORS

The 2030 Agenda (art. 83) mandates the UN Secretary-General, in cooperation with the United Nations system, to prepare an annual report on progress towards the SDGs. The report is based on the global indicator framework developed by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators (IAEG-SDGs).¹⁷

Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals, Report of the Secretary-General, 2017: (E/2017/66): <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/files/report/2017/secretary-general-sdg-report-2017--EN.pdf>

See also **The Sustainable Development Goals Report, United Nations, 2017:** <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2017/>

16. For more information see: <http://sdg.iisd.org/commentary/guest-articles/improving-the-accountability-cycle-recommendations-for-stronger-vnr-guidelines/>

17. Adopted by the Statistical Commission at its forty-eighth session, held in March 2017 (see E/2017/24, chap. I, sect. A, and Annex I)

2018 GUIDELINES FOR VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REVIEWS

In 2016, the United Nations Secretary-General (UNSG) prepared a report on *Critical milestones towards coherent, efficient and inclusive follow-up and review at the global level* (A/70/684). Along with the key principles for follow-up and review, the document proposes a frame for country preparations ahead of the annual VNRs, and includes a proposal for **common reporting guidelines** for VNRs.

In January 2018, a **revised version of the UNSG guidelines** were made public, and UN DESA/DSD¹⁸ published a **Handbook for preparation of Voluntary National Reviews**. The latest guidance for VNRs points in a direction with more emphasis on analysis, as opposed to descriptive plans and intentions.¹⁹

As indicated in the 2030 Agenda, the national follow-up and review processes must take into account “*different national realities, capacities and levels of development*”.²⁰ The reports must strike a balance between being sufficiently generic to allow easy comparison between States and not overlooking unique problems facing individual countries. Civil society organisations and Major Groups have reviewed and analysed the 2017 VNR reports against the UNSG voluntary common reporting guidelines.²¹

GUIDANCE ON VNRs

Voluntary common reporting guidelines for VNRs at the HLPF (January 2018):

https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/17346Updated_Voluntary_Guidelines.pdf

An updated version of the annex of the 2016 UN Secretary-General’s Report on *Critical milestones towards coherent, efficient and inclusive follow-up and review at the global level: A/70/684*.

Handbook for preparation of Voluntary National Reviews (January 2018):

https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/17354VNR_handbook_DRAFT_UNEDITED_VERSION.pdf

This document will be updated to reflect new information and dates and should be read in conjunction with the UNSG guidelines.

18. The Division for Sustainable Development (DSD) is the Secretariat of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD)

19. Report of the Workshop for the 2018 Voluntary National Reviews at the HLPF, held on 4-5 December 2017, Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/17298Geneva_VNR_workshop_report_final_1201.pdf

20. A/RES/70/1: <http://undocs.org/A/RES/70/1>, para. 5

21 https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/17346Updated_Voluntary_Guidelines.pdf

From a human rights perspective, the most significant lessons learned from the 2017 VNRs revolve around the following principles for follow-up and review, which also mirror fundamental principles of a human rights-based approach:²²

- **ACCOUNTABILITY**
- **INCLUSIVE, PARTICIPATORY AND TRANSPARENT PROCESSES**
- **FOCUS ON THOSE FURTHEST BEHIND, INCLUDING THROUGH DISAGGREGATION OF DATA**

LESSONS LEARNED: ACCOUNTABILITY

In the 2017 VNRs, the majority of the 2017 VNR reports did not cover all 17 SDGs, but focused on selected goals and targets. Civil society analysis considers this practice problematic, since it challenges the fundamental universality and interrelatedness of the goals. A risk is that such “cherry-picking” would lead some countries to skip in-depth reporting on SDGs where progress, including from a human rights perspective, is limited or uneven for certain population groups, essentially leaving them behind.

IN-DEPTH REPORTING ON ALL 17 SDGs

In the 2017 VNR reporting, about a third of the 43 countries report on all 17 SDGs. A few countries highlight the indivisibility of the Goals by reporting on their cross-cutting elements.

Portugal is one of the countries that reports on all 17 SDGs and utilizes the 2030 Agenda’s “5 Ps”: People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace and Partnerships in the “nationalization” of the 17 Goals. By reporting on the streamlining of all SDGs into national strategies, plans and policies while considering the Goals in groups through the “5 Ps”, Portugal acknowledges the interrelatedness of the individual Goals while also going into depth with each Goal. Additionally, Portugal highlights its regional and international human rights commitments in relation to several SDGs, e.g. its commitments to CEDAW in relation to SDG 5.

Portugal, VNR, 2017: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/15766Portugal2017_EN_REV_FINAL_29_06_2017.pdf

The variation in the structure of the VNRs makes it difficult to compare progress and challenges across countries. This can ultimately be a barrier for enabling discussion on good practices for a Human Rights-Based Approach to SDG implementation and follow-up. A clear structure that pays attention to human rights challenges could significantly improve the accessibility of the reports, and enhance accountability.

22. Methodology note: the analysis of the 2017 VNRs in this Note is based on: UN DESA, November 2017, *Synthesis of Voluntary National Reviews 2017*; individual VNRs and civil society analysis on the VNRs for the 2017 HLPF; Concord Europe, July 2017, *HLPF Voluntary National Reviews 2017: spur of the moment or planting the seeds for a sustainable future?*; Together 2030, July 2017, *Voluntary National Reviews: what are countries prioritizing?*; Together 2030, October 2017, *Guiding for accountability*; World Vision, October 2017, *Tracking SDGs Progress to Leave No One Behind*.

NEXT STEPS - ACCOUNTABILITY

INTEGRATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS REPORTING AND RECOMMENDATIONS IN VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REVIEWS

The SDGs are anchored in human rights, and the vast majority of SDG targets are already monitored by the national, regional and international human rights monitoring mechanisms. Hence, these mechanisms, are perfectly placed to support states in the follow-up and review of the SDGs. The key international human rights mechanisms that can contribute are the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), the Special Procedures and the Treaty Bodies. States and other actors can use the analysis, data and recommendations that are already being produced by these mechanisms to guide their SDG implementation²³. Using existing human rights mechanisms will enhance efficiency, coherence and accountability, and ensure national anchorage of the follow-up and review²⁴ including with a view to easing reporting obligations.

“Draw on existing reports. Use existing national platforms and processes that could contribute to the VNR writing and analysis process. Examples include: [...] reports submitted to international bodies, including those under international human rights treaties”

Handbook for preparation of Voluntary National Reviews, January 2018

The UN DESA/DSD **Handbook for preparation of Voluntary National Reviews** supports such an approach by encouraging States to draw on existing human rights reporting when drafting their VNRs. Along with the Handbook, a few other publications and tools²⁵, point in the direction of integrating human rights reporting in SDG reporting and follow-up.

A few States, including Costa Rica and Belgium, have already harvested the advantages of “recycling” their human rights reporting in their VNR, and of drawing on human rights recommendations in their SDG implementation.

23 *Human Rights & SDGs – Pursuing synergies*, the Danish Institute for Human Rights, the Permanent Missions of Denmark and Chile to the United Nations in Geneva, Universal Rights Group, 2017, <http://bit.ly/2yFxdM>

24. For more on a HRBA to the SDGs, see DIHR 2016, *Human Rights in Follow-up and Review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, bit.ly/follow-review and DIHR 2017, *Human Rights and Data – tools and resources for sustainable development*, bit.ly/humanrights-data

25. E.g. UNDG training guides on *Tracking the Follow-up of Human Rights Recommendations (2017)*, *Guidelines to support country reporting on the Sustainable Development Goals (2017)* and the Danish Institute for Human Rights' *Human Rights and Data (2017)* and the *Human Rights Guide to the SDGs*.

COSTA RICA: GENDER EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS REPORTING

In its review of Goal 5 (gender equality), the **Costa Rican** VNR report²⁶ integrates information from Costa Rica's seventh periodic report to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW/C/CRI/7²⁷).

This includes information on process-oriented activities such as trainings on gender equality as well as information on more structural legal measures such as revision of existing laws on domestic violence. The specific activities covered by the recycled reporting include:

- Access to justice for women: training of State institutions on CEDAW (Public Defence Service and Judicial Police);
- The role of the National Women's Institute (INAMU): training on women's rights, equality and non-discrimination for public entities, women's groups and civil society;
- Amendments to the "Law against Domestic Violence" No. 7586;
- Strategy on preventing femicide and violence against women. Establishment of local multi-stakeholder committees to provide immediate care in cases of high risk of violence against women; and
- Inequalities for LGBTIQ community: Discrimination and gender based violence.

The integration of human right reporting in the Costa Rican VNR can be traced back to Costa Rica's strong inter-ministerial National Mechanism for Implementation, Reporting and Follow-up (NMRF), which includes a Commission on Human Rights that conducts its work through subcommittees across ministries. It includes representatives of a range of ministries and State institutions as well as experts, and is supported by an advisory committee which includes international experts.²⁸

The Costa Rican experience illustrates how a cross-ministerial network of human rights focal points enables effective human rights reporting procedures, which can be build on when preparing reports on sustainable development. Hence, building on existing NMRFs eases the SDG reporting and has a constructive and resource-efficient potential for States.

Human rights mechanisms can contribute to SDG follow-up and review by providing qualitative reporting (as illustrated in the Costa Rican VNR), but also by identifying specific and systemic implementation challenges, as well as by providing recommendations and guidance to overcome these. The Belgium VNR provides an example of how Treaty Body recommendations can guide national SDG indicators in the context of children's rights.

26. Costa Rica, VNR 2017: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/15846Costa_Rica.pdf

27. CEDAW/C/CRI/7: http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2FCRI%2F7&Lang=en

28. OHCHR 2016: *National Mechanisms for Reporting and Follow-up - a Study of State Engagement with International Human Rights Mechanisms*, http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/HR_PUB_16_1_NMRF_Study.pdf

BELGIUM: RIGHTS OF THE CHILD AND TREATY BODY RECOMMENDATIONS

Belgium is one of the few countries that explicitly refer to specific human rights recommendations from a Treaty Body in its 2017 VNR report.

In relation to **target 16.2** (“End Abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children”), the report explains that a set of national indicators on children’s rights have been developed upon **recommendation** from the **UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC)**. The 40 indicators cover rights such as the right to health, education, protection of family life etc. Moreover, in addition to existing surveys, the Belgian National Commission on the Rights of the Child has carried out two surveys in 2017 to cover some of the existing data gaps.

The Belgian VNR report states that: *“This monitoring work on children’s rights will be used by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, but its primary purpose is to be used in Belgium by politicians, administrations and civil society, either to contextualize their actions, to start a debate, or to highlight inequalities and identify groups of more vulnerable children (16.2).”*²⁹

Hence, the recommendation from the CRC has inspired an integrated approach where national indicators on children’s rights both benefit the monitoring work of the Treaty Body (CRC) and can guide and inform a wide range of national actors, such as politicians and civil society, in their integrated work with human rights and the SDGs.

In addition, the Belgian VNR notes its support of the work of several **UN Special Rapporteurs**, such as the UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights (in relation to SDG 1.1), the Special Rapporteur on the right to food (SDG 2) and the UN Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health (target 3.4 and 3.5), illustrating how the Special Procedures of the HRC are relevant across a wide range of the 17 SDGs.

29. Belgium’s VNR, 2017: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/15721Belgium_Rev.pdf

EXAMPLES OF ENTRY POINTS FOR SUPPLEMENTING VNRS WITH HUMAN RIGHTS REPORTING

Although only few of the 2017 VNR reports contain information from international human rights mechanisms, a number of countries highlight issues that could be informed by their reporting to national, regional and international human rights mechanisms.

One such issue is the revision of existing laws or the enactment of new ones, regarding **domestic violence or gender-based violence**. This is reported on by Belarus, Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Jordan and Uruguay in their 2017 VNR report, and is also an issue addressed in human rights reporting.

Another issue is **non-discrimination** in general.

Bangladesh, Belgium, Cyprus, Ethiopia, and Jordan were among the countries that highlighted their actions to tackle discrimination in their 2017 VNR reports, with many referring to legal and constitutional provisions prohibiting discrimination based on a variety of grounds. Sweden mentioned legislation to counter discrimination and to support national minorities.³⁰

Taking the step from highlighting the linkages between human rights commitments and SDGs to actually using the human rights reporting itself is a matter of practically linking the human rights reporting that already exists to specific SDGs and targets. Thereby, States and other actors can recycle their reporting and enrich their reports to the VNR with reporting to human rights mechanisms such as UPR, Treaty Bodies and Special Procedures.

UNPACKING INFORMATION FROM HUMAN RIGHTS MECHANISMS

In order to better accommodate an effective integration of human rights reporting into the VNRS, there is a need for more general guidance on how qualitative analysis can support country reporting on the SDGs. Moreover, there is need for more technical guidance on how to practically unpack recommendations and reporting from international human rights mechanisms in order to integrate them into SDG reporting.

30. UN DESA, November 2017, *Synthesis of Voluntary National Reviews 2017*, Report prepared by Division for Sustainable Development (DSD): <http://bit.ly/2h1PMNO>

Several **Treaty Bodies (TBs)** have already explored synergies between human rights and the SDGs and provided comments on how their respective treaties relate to the SDGs. The Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the Committee on Migrant Workers (CMW) and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) are the most advanced in that regard. Generally, Treaty Bodies can raise human rights issues in the context of the SDGs, when States present to the Committees. Further, Treaty Bodies can also encourage States to take the link to specific human rights instruments and obligations into account in their National Action Plans and implementation processes. Thereby, States can use the dialogue with Treaty Bodies and their expertise to bridge national gaps in implementation.

Special Procedures (SPs) mandate-holders have already reflected on the need for taking a human rights-based approach to SDGs implementation. For example, the Special Rapporteur on Health has recently published a report on the linkage between the right to health, and the SDGs.

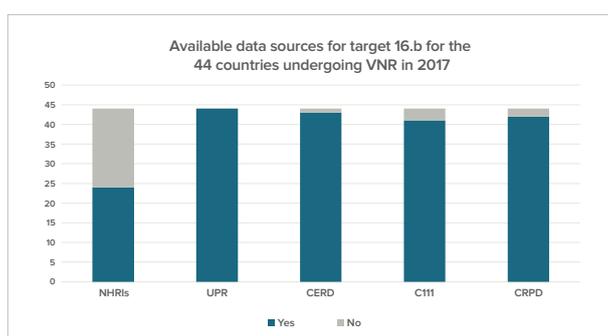
SPs engage directly with States, including through country visits, and have a clearly defined function to identify best practices as well as challenges, where capacity-building and technical assistance from the UN human rights pillar could be beneficial.

SPs mandate-holders also engage with UN agencies who lead global monitoring of relevant SDGs.

The Universal Periodic Review (UPR) is a peer review mechanism with unique participation of member states. The commencement of the 3rd cycle provides an opportunity for more concerted efforts towards leveraging synergies so the UPR can inform SDG action at the country-level.

The figure below illustrates the potential for using human rights monitoring mechanisms to contribute to the monitoring of SDGs, by indicating existing data sources for **target 16.b**: Promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development. Specifically, the chart shows how many of the 44 countries participating in the VNRs at the 2017 HLPF:

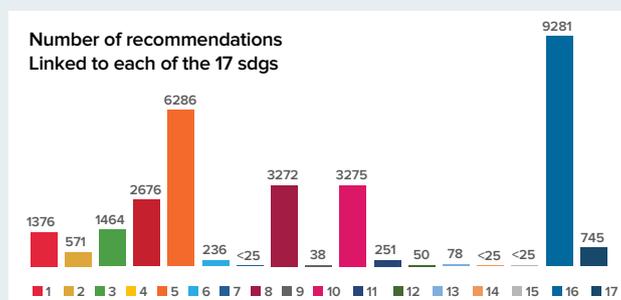
- Have independent National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) in compliance with the Paris Principles, which regularly monitor and report on discriminatory legislation;
- Have received UPR recommendations relating to the promotion and enforcement of non-discriminatory laws and policies, and;
- Have ratified the Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (**CERD**), ILO Convention 111 (**C111**) and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (**CRPD**).



The **Universal Human Rights Index**³¹ facilitates access to all human rights recommendations issued by the Universal Periodic Review, the Special Procedures and Treaty Bodies.

LINKING THE UPR TO THE SDG

Over the two cycles of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), more than 50,000 recommendations have been issued by states. Using an innovative and experimental data mining procedure, the Danish Institute for Human Rights (DIHR) has so far been possible to link more than 50% of these to specific SDG targets. The below chart illustrates how recommendations are linked across the 17 Goals.



31. The Universal Human Rights Index: <http://uhri.ohchr.org/en/>

A database launched by DIHR in March 2018 allows users to search these recommendations by country and SDG targets: <http://upr.humanrights.dk/>



NATIONAL MECHANISMS FOR IMPLEMENTATION, REPORTING AND FOLLOW-UP

A National Mechanism for Implementation, Reporting and Follow-up (NMRF) is a governmental structure mandated to coordinate, prepare reports and engage with international and regional human rights mechanisms (including the UPR, Treaty Bodies and Special Procedures). Such NMRFs also coordinate and track national follow-up and implementation of the recommendations emanating from these human rights mechanisms.³²

“NMRFs have the potential to become one of the key components of the national human rights to the national level by establishing a national coordination structure.”

Report of the Secretary-General, A/72/351

32. OHCHR 2016, *National Mechanisms for Reporting and Follow-up - A Practical Guide to Effective State Engagement with International Human Rights Mechanisms*, http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/HR_PUB_16_1_NMRF_PracticalGuide.pdf
OHCHR 2016, *National Mechanisms for Reporting and Follow-up - a Study of State Engagement with International Human Rights Mechanisms*, http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/HR_PUB_16_1_NMRF_Study.pdf

NMRFS AND SDGS: TRACKING HUMAN RIGHTS RECOMMENDATIONS

OHCHR has published a Practical Guide and an accompanying Study on State Engagement with International Human Rights Mechanisms.³³ The Guide identifies key elements of well-functioning and efficient NMRFs, drawing on practices from 23 Member States.

A NMRF is uniquely placed to take the lead in clustering and prioritizing human rights recommendations. Some of the best practice examples of NMRFs show that clustering hundreds of recommendations emanating from the human rights mechanisms down to 10-20 core priorities, allow States to structure their national action plans around these prioritised clusters. Several NMRFs are using IT solutions to share and coordinate the implementation and reporting on human rights recommendations (e.g. SI DERECHOS³⁴ in Ecuador and SIMORE³⁵ in Paraguay) and are expanding their scope to also coordinate the implementation and reporting on SDGs.

Expanding or enhancing NMRFs by clustering human rights recommendations around the SDGs can help mitigate the burden of reporting on the SDGs, as well as streamline the process of domestic implementation. Hence, NMRFs offer an action-oriented tool for building on complementarities of human rights recommendations and obligations, on the one hand, and the SDGs, on the other.³⁶

GROUP OF FRIENDS FOR NATIONAL MECHANISMS FOR IMPLEMENTATION, REPORTING AND FOLLOW-UP

The Group of Friends for NMRFs is focused on strengthening domestic implementation, impact, reporting and follow-up, and brings together States, OHCHR, UN agencies, NHRIs and civil society to share national good practice. The Group will undertake consultations at regional level to provide an opportunity for States to share best practices and experiences on how to improve domestic implementation.

33. OHCHR: http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/HR_PUB_16_1_NMRF_PracticalGuide.pdf

34. SI DERECHOS, <http://www.justicia.gob.ec/la-plataforma-si-derechos-permite-seguimiento-de-recomendaciones-internacionales-en-derechos-humanos/>

35. SIMORE, <http://www.mre.gov.py/mdhpy/Buscador/Home>

36. Human Rights & SDGs – Pursuing synergies, the Danish Institute for Human Rights, the Permanent Missions of Denmark and Chile to the United Nations in Geneva, Universal Rights Group, 2017, <http://bit.ly/2yFfxdM>

ECUADOR: SI DERECHOS – AN ONLINE NATIONAL MECHANISM FOR REPORTING AND FOLLOW-UP

The adoption of a new Constitution in Ecuador in 2008 was part of a wave of new constitutions in Latin America that provide explicit guarantees for human rights. Along the same lines, Ecuador's National Development Plan provides guidance and principles for the implementation of human rights, and is aligned with the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.

In 2012, Ecuador set up an information system on human rights called SI DERECHOS, developed by the Ministry of Justice with the support of OHCHR. SI DERECHOS is an online platform, which provides a report library, and an overview of recommendations and information relating to the 73 human rights recognized in the national Constitution. Although the system is administered by the Ministry of Justice, the participation of all governmental agencies and branches of the State is an important aspect of SI DERECHOS as an effective NMRF. By gathering all relevant human rights information and recommendations, SI DERECHOS aims to secure:

- Effective social participation in public affairs and strengthened transparency;
- Monitoring of progress and in human rights implementation;
- Mainstreaming of human rights across all national and sectorial policies; and
- Internal human rights information management between line ministries in the context of international reporting processes.

The Ecuadorian experience highlights the significant value of NMRFs. Online platforms such as SI DERECHOS represent a crucial foundation for realizing the interwoven objectives of sustainable development and human right. Moreover, by making the process transparent and information available for all actors, it promotes shared responsibility for the full realization of human rights and the SDGs.

HOW TO RECYCLE REPORTING



HOW TO USE HUMAN RIGHTS REPORTING AND MONITORING IN VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REVIEWS.

STEP 1: IDENTIFY LINKS BETWEEN TARGET AND HUMAN RIGHTS INSTRUMENTS

Identify links between SDG targets and human rights and international labour standards.

- Use the Human Rights Guide to the SDGs to identify links between SDG targets and international human rights and labour standards: <http://sdg.humanrights.dk/en>

Example: SDG target aim to, inter alia, immediately secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour. Child labour is addressed in the Convention on the Rights of the Child and in ILO Convention No. 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour.

STEP 2: IDENTIFY THE INSTRUMENTS RELEVANT FOR YOUR COUNTRY

Identify which international human rights instruments and international labour standards are applicable to your country.

- See OHCHR, status of ratification of human rights treaties by country: <http://indicators.ohchr.org/>
- See ILO, ratification of ILO conventions by country: <http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:11001:0::NO::>

Example: The Convention on the Rights of the Child has 193 states parties, and ILO Convention No. 182 is ratified by 181 countries. This means that the vast majority of the world's states are party to these conventions.

STEP 3: IDENTIFY RELEVANT REPORTS

Find the relevant human rights reporting of your country. Your country regularly submits reports to the bodies established to monitor and supervise the implementation of international treaties. Once you have identified the human rights and labour standards applicable to your country, you should find the latest reports submitted to these bodies. This task is greatly facilitated if your country has established a National Mechanism for Implementation, Reporting and Follow-up (NMRF).

Example: The vast majority of countries in the world regularly report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child and to the ILO supervisory bodies on progress in implementing the Convention on the Rights of the Child and ILO Convention No. 182. These reports most probably contain information that is relevant for reporting on SDG target 8.7. on child labour.

STEP 4: FIND RELEVANT GUIDANCE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Find the comments and recommendations that human rights monitoring bodies and ILO supervisory mechanisms have provided to your country and use these to reach the SDG targets.

- Search for relevant comments by country in the Universal Human Rights Index: <http://uhri.ohchr.org/en>
- See a summary of key human rights recommendation by country: <http://uhri.ohchr.org/en/summary/country>
- See comments of the ILO supervisory bodies: <http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:11000::NO::>
- See how UPR recommendations to your country relates to specific SDG targets: <http://upr.humanrights.dk/>

Example: Can somebody look at the amount/number of countries with recommendations by ILO CEACR on C182? can we say something here about the amount of UPR recommendations for target 8.7, as well as the number of countries that have UP recommendations relevant for 8.7?

STEP 5: IMPLEMENT AND REPORT BACK

Design your implementation plan for relevant SDG targets in accordance with recommendation received from relevant human rights and labour standards monitoring bodies, and report back on progress to these bodies as well as to the HLPF.

LESSONS LEARNED: INCLUSIVE, PARTICIPATORY, TRANSPARENT PROCESSES

Systematic and meaningful inclusion of a broad range of stakeholders, especially vulnerable and marginalised groups, in the different stages of the Voluntary National Review

Participation in public affairs is a fundamental human right. Moreover the participation of a broad range of stakeholders, including vulnerable and marginalized groups, is crucial if the 2030 Agenda should live up to its promise of “leaving no one behind”. In order to obtain a systematic and meaningful involvement of civil society and other stakeholders, World Vision has identified five main entry points that states can follow:

1. Include civil society and other stakeholders in preparations at an early stage through open consultations;
2. Share draft report with stakeholders for feedback and comments;
3. Encourage independent contributions;
4. Encourage shadow reporting by civil society, NHRIs and other stakeholders; and
5. Include stakeholder representatives in presentation at HLPF.³⁷

More than two years into implementation, many states have systematized and institutionalized stakeholder engagement. Likewise, several of the 2017 VNR reports recognize that implementation and follow-up of the 2030 Agenda require engagement from a broad range of stakeholders.

HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM 2017 MINISTERIAL DECLARATION

The HLPF 2017 Ministerial Declaration points to the need for proactively reaching out to specific rights-holders groups, and states that: *“there can be no effective implementation, or accountability to our citizens, where no awareness exists. Efforts should be made to reach out to all stakeholders, including subnational and local authorities, indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, civil society, business, the private sector, the media, parliamentarians, and the scientific and academic community”* (para. 28).

https://www.un.org/ecosoc/sites/www.un.org.ecosoc/files/files/en/2017doc/2017_draft_ministerial_declaration_hlpf-hls.pdf

37. World Vision, October 2017, *Tracking SDGs Progress to Leave No One Behind*

INCLUSION OF STAKEHOLDERS AT DIFFERENT STAGES OF THE 2017 VNRs

Including stakeholders in preparations

All 43 countries that reported to the 2017 HLPF included some element of stakeholder engagement in their preparations, but the level and modality varied across countries.

Some countries, such as Benin, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Jordan, Kenya, Tajikistan and Thailand, go into details about the diverse stakeholders consulted (CSOs, private sector, academia, youth, labour associations, local authorities, among others), while other countries are more vague in their descriptions, referring to consultations with "relevant stakeholders".

A few countries explicitly report on efforts to "reach those furthest behind" in their VNR preparations, by carrying out consultations with vulnerable and marginalised groups.

Costa Rica, for instance, carried out consultations with older persons, LGBTIQ persons, persons with disabilities and indigenous peoples, and includes a section under each SDG on the challenges identified by these groups. Approaches for outreach include seminars, workshops, bilateral discussions and online channels.

Sharing of draft reports

Some countries shared their draft reports with stakeholders for feedback and comments. These include Argentina, Bangladesh, Belgium, Belize, Costa Rica, Denmark and Ethiopia.

Independent contributions

Denmark, Cyprus, Netherlands and Sweden are among the countries that went a step further to include stakeholder-generated content in their VNR reports. This included independent contributions from youth, civil society, academia and business.

Shadow reporting by civil society, NHRIs and other stakeholders

Some countries addressed shadow reports or complementary reports prepared by civil society in their presentations at the HLPF. Portugal, for instance, explained how NGOs, with the support of the Camões Institute for Cooperation and Language and the United Nations Regional Information Centre for Western Europe, are planning on preparing periodic sectoral shadow reports.

Inclusion of stakeholder representatives in the delegation at HLPF

Several countries included stakeholder representatives, such as academia, youth, the private sector and local authorities, in their presentations at the HLPF. Azerbaijan, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Jordan and Uruguay, included stakeholders at the podium during the VNR presentation. Others, such as Argentina, Belgium, Denmark, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, Nigeria, Slovenia, Sweden and Thailand went a step further, and assigned the stakeholders specific speaking roles during their VNR presentations.

UN DESA, November 2017: *Synthesis of Voluntary National Reviews 2017, Together 2030*, July 2017: *Voluntary National Reviews: What are countries prioritizing?*, World Vision, October 2017: *Tracking SDGs Progress to Leave No One Behind*

AZERBAIJAN: ENSURING INCLUSIVE STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION

In Azerbaijan, the government established a National Coordination Council for Sustainable Development (NCCSD) with a Secretariat in the Ministry of Economy. The Azerbaijani Commissioner for Human Rights (A-status NHRI in accordance with the Paris Principles³⁸) is part of the NCCSD and acts as a bridge between civil society and government.³⁹ A core function of the NCCSD is to ensure inclusive stakeholder participation and translate global SDGs into a national context by aligning national plans and strategies with the SDGs. In this regard, the NCCD points to inclusive and rights-based national strategies and policies as a main priority.

In the Spring of 2017, the NCCSD, in collaboration with the UN Office in Azerbaijan, conducted a series of consultations on SDG implementation, bringing together academia, civil society, women, youth, parliament and other stakeholders. The consultations uncovered two main areas, which the government will address:

- Dialogue and awareness-raising on SDGs should be strengthened centrally and in the regions; and
- Establishment of a multi-stakeholder group to support the work of the NCCSD.

In addition, the government is creating an interactive online platform for promotion of SDGs, targets, implementation phases and indicators. The government intends to use the online portal as a tool for civil society participation in consultations on national SDGs, monitoring and reporting process.⁴⁰

38. The Paris Principles relate to the Status of National Institutions. See: <https://nhri.ohchr.org/EN/AboutUs/Pages/ParisPrinciples.aspx>

39. See: <http://www.ombudsman.gov.az/en/view/news/713/representative-of-the-azerbaijani-ombudsman-attended-international-event-in-poland>

40. See Azerbaijan's VNR 2017: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/memberstates/azerbaijan>

NEXT STEPS: INCLUSIVE, PARTICIPATORY, TRANSPARENT PROCESSES

Strong institutions are necessary to ensure inclusive, participatory and transparent processes in the implementation and monitoring of the 2030 Agenda.

NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS INSTITUTIONS AS ACCOUNTABILITY MECHANISMS

The independent nature of National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs), their bridging role between their country and the international human rights system⁴¹, their bridging role at national level between government and civil society, as well as their experience and expertise in monitoring and reporting on the implementation of human rights standards place them at the heart of what has been called the SDG “web of accountability”.⁴² As independent State institutions mandated to support national compliance with international human rights commitments, NHRIs are crucial elements of the institutional accountability architecture necessary for ensuring peaceful and inclusive societies with access to justice for all.⁴³

NHRIs AS DRIVING FORCE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

National Human Rights Institutions are independent State institutions mandated to support national compliance with international human rights commitments.

The ‘existence of independent National Human Rights Institutions in compliance with the Paris Principles’ is the global indicator for target 16.a. The fact that the existence of a NHRI is an indicator under Goal 16 underlines the catalytic role of NHRIs as a driving force for upholding the human rights-related aspects of the SDGs.



SDG INDICATOR: 16.A.1

Existence of independent National Human Rights Institutions in compliance with the Paris Principles

43. Read more about NHRIs engaging with the 2030 Agenda: GANHRI 2017, *National Human Rights Institutions Engaging with the SDGs*, <http://bit.ly/2AygYOp>

41. Read more about the potential of NHRIs in this report of the UN Secretary General: *A/70/347*: <http://nhri.ohchr.org/EN/News/Documents/A-70-347%20en.pdf>, and the NHRIs and the UN System in this UN resolution: *A/RES/70/163*: <http://nhri.ohchr.org/EN/IHRS/UNNY/Pages/Main.aspx>

42. See Alison Hosie, Scottish Human Rights Commission, *Contributing to the Accountability Web: The Role of NHRIs and the SDGs*, 23 March 2016 <http://bit.ly/2tLVITB>; and Kate Donald, *Promising the World: Accountability and the SDGs*, 2016, <http://bit.ly/2sGdQis>, *Breaking the Accountability Taboo in Sustainable Development Negotiations*, CESR, June 2nd, 2015: <http://cesr.org/article.php?id=1732>

THE MÉRIDA DECLARATION: THE ROLE OF NHRIs IN IMPLEMENTING THE 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

In October 2015, NHRIs from all regions met under the umbrella of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI⁴⁴) in Mérida, Mexico, to discuss how NHRIs can contribute to translate the Agenda 2030 and the SDGs into reality on the ground. The Conference adopted the **Mérida Declaration**⁴⁵, through which NHRIs commit to collaborate in mutual capacity-building and sharing of experiences to contribute to a Human Rights-Based Approach to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The Mérida Declaration outlines how NHRIs can apply their unique mandate to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the realisation of human rights:

- Advise national/local governments
- Raise awareness and promote dialogue and participation
- Develop and sustain partnerships for implementation
- Shape national indicators
- Monitor and report on progress
- Hold governments accountable
- Investigate rights violations
- Provide access to justice

44. The network was formerly known as ICC, “The International Coordinating Committee of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights”

45. Mérida Declaration: <http://nhri.ohchr.org/EN/ICC/InternationalConference/12IC/Background%20Information/Merida%20Declaration%20FINAL.pdf>

NHRIs AND DISCRIMINATORY LEGISLATION

Non-discrimination is a cross-cutting area where NHRIs can contribute to qualitative analysis, data collection and guidance, based on their mandate, knowledge and expertise. SDG targets 16.b, 10.3 and 5.c call for the elimination of discriminatory laws and policies and the promotion and enforcement of non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development. NHRIs are well placed to report on discriminatory policies and legislation, thus contributing to a fuller picture of the progress towards these targets.

In December 2016, the **Arab Network of NHRIs** (ANNHRI) convened a workshop on the role of NHRIs in monitoring and implementing the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development. A survey among the 14 participating NHRIs⁴⁶ revealed that:

- All 14 NHRIs undertake **law reviews** to detect discriminatory legislation;
- All 14 NHRIs have **detected national laws** that should be eliminated or amended; and
- All 14 NHRIs have formulated **recommendations** for such legal reforms.

The survey shows that NHRIs are **immediately ready** to contribute to the monitoring of Targets 5.c, 10.3 and 16.b on the elimination of discriminatory legislation and the promotion of appropriate legislation, policies and action in this regard. Likewise, 24 out of the 44 countries participating in the Voluntary National Review (VNR) in 2017 have independent NHRIs in compliance with the Paris Principles (A-status), which means that these countries had access to reliable information and recommendations on discriminatory legislation from their NHRIs.⁴⁷

46. The participating NHRIs were: A-status: Egypt, Jordan, Mauritania, Morocco, Palestine, Qatar. B-status: Algeria, Bahrain, Iraq, Libya, Oman, Tunisia. No status: Djibouti, Sudan.

47. Read more in this DIHR chapter on target 16.b for the Annual TAP Network publication on Sustainable Development Goal 16 (April 2017), available at <https://www.humanrights.dk/what-we-do/sustainability/human-rights-sdgs/sdg-indicators>

LESSONS LEARNED: FOCUS ON THOSE FURTHEST BEHIND

STATUS AND SITUATION OF VULNERABLE GROUPS

A way of ensuring that systematic attention is paid to the status and situation of vulnerable groups and groups at risk of being left behind, is to dedicate a section of the VNR to the theme of “Leaving no one behind”. Member States should be encouraged to include a section under each Goal or a separate section that identifies vulnerable groups and challenges for “reaching the furthest behind first”, including strategies, policies and initiatives to address them.

“LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND”

Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Kenya, Netherlands and Nigeria all dedicate a section of their 2017 VNR reports to the pledge of “leaving no one behind”.

Bangladesh includes a focus on persons with disabilities, and identifies specific actions taken under SDG 1, 3 and 5 in relation to children with disabilities.

Ethiopia includes a sub-section focusing on children’s rights and welfare and report on policies and information systems that have been rolled out since the adoption of the SDGs. At the federal level, a database on children’s rights and welfare is being developed.

Kenya reports on the rights-based approach of its 2010 Constitution, which aims to move Kenya towards a more equitable and inclusive future. The Kenya 2010 Constitution contains a comprehensive Bill of Rights, including rights to the highest attainable standard of health, to education, accessible and adequate housing, water and sanitation, as well as the right to food. These rights are all guaranteed as enforceable rights that extend to all individuals and specific groups, including children, youth and persons with disabilities.

UN DESA, November 2017: *Synthesis of Voluntary National Reviews 2017*

States already report to a number of human rights mechanisms on the situation of vulnerable groups. States can thus recycle the data that they are already producing for the purpose of SDG tracking. In general, data collection must be guided by the Human Rights-Based Approach to Data (HRBAD) developed by OHCHR, emphasizing the importance of the principles of self-identification, participation, disaggregation, transparency, privacy and accountability.

A HUMAN RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH TO DATA⁴⁸

OHCHR has defined 6 main components of a Human Rights-Based Approach to Data (HRBAD), which should guide data collection in all circumstances:

SELF-IDENTIFICATION. All identity categories must be developed through a participatory approach. Data collection should not create or reinforce discrimination, bias or stereotypes.

PARTICIPATION. Participation is central to a HRBAD, which should ensure free, active and meaningful participation of relevant stakeholders, in particular the most marginalized population groups.

DISAGGREGATION on the basis of the grounds of discrimination enshrined in international human rights law is essential to reveal underlying disparities in the development process, and highlight the specific challenges that different population groups face, in particular vulnerable groups in a given context.

TRANSPARENCY. This principle is related to the right to seek, receive and impart information, enshrined in international human rights law. Ensuring transparency implies access of civil society to data on the monitoring and realisation of human rights.

ACCOUNTABILITY. In their capacity as duty-bearers, state institutions have a duty to ensure that they respect, protect and fulfil human rights in their conduct of statistical work. This includes ensuring the independence of statistical data gathering.

PRIVACY. Access to information must be balanced with the right to privacy. Data collected for statistical purposes must be strictly confidential

48. UN DESA, November 2017, *Synthesis of Voluntary National Reviews 2017*, Report prepared by Division for Sustainable Development (DSD): <http://bit.ly/2hIPMNO>

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

In some of the 2017 VNR reports, indigenous peoples are considered both as a group in need of concerted support, and as actors engaged in enhanced implementation of the SDGs.

Nepal reports on how its amended Civil Service Act reserves a percentage of public service positions for women and marginalised groups, including dalits, indigenous peoples and persons with disabilities.

In **Malaysia's** reporting on SDG 15 (Life on Land), a future aim is to include indigenous and local communities in the management of natural resources, as well as empowering them to give or withhold consent to proposed projects that may affect their lands.

Chile reports on the specific challenges that the indigenous population is facing, including high multi-dimensional poverty rates. In terms of participation and institutional strengthening, the results of a consultation process for indigenous peoples were considered in the preparation of draft legislation for the establishment of a Ministry of Indigenous Peoples and Council of Indigenous people.⁴⁹

VULNERABLE GROUPS IDENTIFIED IN THE 2017 VNRS:

Indigenous peoples
Persons with disabilities
Older persons
LGBTIQ
Migrants
Women and girls
Children

49. UN DESA, November 2017, *Synthesis of Voluntary National Reviews 2017, Report prepared by Division for Sustainable Development (DSD)*: <http://bit.ly/2h1PMNO>



KNOWLEDGE-SHARING AND GOOD PRACTICE ON DISAGGREGATED DATA

UNITED NATIONS WORLD DATA FORUM AND THE CAPE TOWN GLOBAL ACTION PLAN FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT DATA

Data disaggregation is the main approach suggested in the 2030 Agenda for monitoring unequal progress for different population groups. **The Cape Town Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data**, which was launched at the first United Nations **World Data Forum (WDF)** in Cape Town in January 2017, focuses specifically on strengthening and expanding capacity for disaggregated data to ensure that no one is left behind.⁵⁰ The Global Action Plan calls for a commitment by governments, policy leaders and the international community to undertake key actions under six strategic areas, including: coordination and leadership; innovation and modernization of national statistical systems; dissemination of data on sustainable development; building partnerships; and mobilizing resources.

The WDF brings together public and private measurements experts, statistical producers, information system specialists, users, as well as other key stakeholders such as NHRIs to discuss data for sustainable development. The WDF 2018 will be hosted by Federal Competitiveness and Statistics Authority, of the United Arab Emirates from 22 to 24 October 2018.

50. Read more in DIHR 2017, *Human Rights and Data – tools and resources for sustainable development*: bit.ly/humanrights-data

DATA DISAGGREGATION AND ALTERNATIVE DATA SOURCES, SUCH AS CITIZEN-GENERATED DATA

The 2017 VNR reports reflect the challenges with data disaggregation: the top three challenges highlighted by include 1) the lack of disaggregated data, 2) the lack of capacity in data collection and management, and 3) insufficient financial and technical support.

DATA DISAGGREGATION

Several (but not all) of the 2017 VNR reports include a statistical annex. These include Afghanistan, Argentina, Bangladesh, Belgium, Benin, Botswana, Chile, Cyprus, Denmark, Guatemala, Indonesia, Kenya, Panama, Peru, Tajikistan, Thailand and Zimbabwe.

A number of countries cite efforts to improve the availability of disaggregated data. These include Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Costa Rica, Indonesia, Jordan, Kenya, Malaysia, Nepal, Panama, Peru and Thailand.

Some countries also specify the importance of availability of disaggregated data for ensuring that no one is being left behind (e.g. Azerbaijan, Denmark, Nepal and Tajikistan), but the number of countries that showcase disaggregated data in their VNRs is modest.

By way of example, Thailand's VNR report includes a statistical annex, which describes indicators and data sources and indicates which areas of data that can be disaggregated. Thailand also stresses that the data available for several of the national indicators cannot be disaggregated at the local level by age, gender or disability.

Along the same lines, Belgium's VNR report specifies which national indicators can be disaggregated by particular characteristics.

UN DESA, November 2017: *Synthesis of Voluntary National Reviews 2017*

NEXT STEPS: FOCUS ON THOSE FURTHEST BEHIND

ALTERNATIVE DATA SOURCES

The commitment of the 2030 Agenda to data disaggregation is reaffirmed in target 17.18, which explicitly aims, by 2020, to significantly increase the availability of such disaggregated data. The strengthening of statistical capacity for disaggregation is key to enabling a systematic monitoring of the equality and nondiscrimination dimensions of the entire 2030 Agenda. However, significant challenges remain in terms of building sufficient statistical capacity for data disaggregation, and many countries are still struggling with producing the most basic statistics.

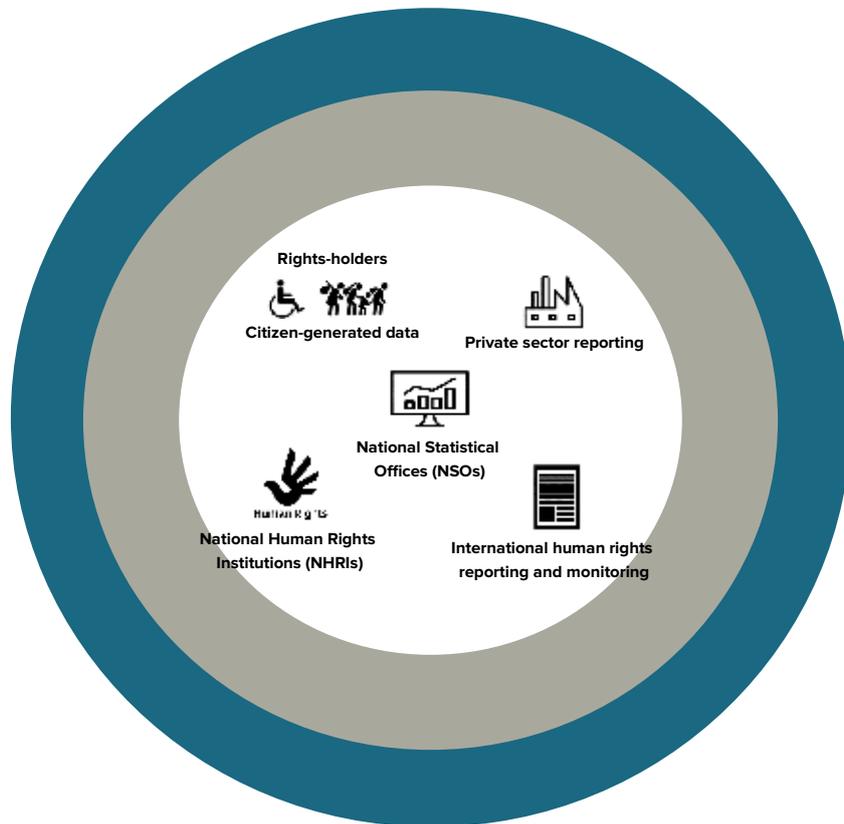
Realistically, disaggregated data collection against some of the global SDG indicators will remain largely aspirational in many countries in the near future. In this context, it is crucial to keep in mind that data is more than statistics and that increasing the amount of quantitative data does not necessarily lead to better decisions. Rather, there is a need for collaborative efforts to develop creative, innovative, efficient and cost-effective approaches to monitoring and data collection, which can supplement statistical data based on global indicators.

ALTERNATIVE DATA SOURCES

The 2017 VNR reports reflect some examples of good practice for diversified data collection:

Involving stakeholders in data collection. Belarus and Ethiopia, among others, noted that national statistical systems would have a central role, but their efforts could be supplemented with data and analysis produced by other stakeholders. In Nigeria, over 200 young people were trained on open data and collection of data on the state of infrastructure and budget administration in the country and mobilized towards improving the living conditions of people in slum areas through data collection as a tool for advocacy.

Identification of new data sources to guide SDG implementation. To meet growing data requirements, official statistical offices are tapping into new data sources. India is considering using space technology for household surveys. In its report the Netherlands noted that St Maarten has conducted a national household budget survey, focusing on social needs to provide useful statistics to better target future poverty eradication initiatives to the population.



A PLURALISTIC ECOSYSTEM OF DATA

By building a pluralistic ecosystem of data, based on the complementarity of national and global indicators as well as data from multiple sources, it is possible to take a strategic approach to SDG monitoring and “measure what we treasure”. This approach is, for example taken by Statistics Denmark, which has established a national Data Partnership for SDG monitoring. The Data Partnership include a range of government institutions, academic and research institutions, business, civil society organizations, as well as the Danish Institute for Human Rights (DIHR). DIHR will be the data provider for several SDG targets, based on its existing monitoring and data collection.

KEY PRINCIPLES FOR AN ECOSYSTEM OF DATA THAT LEAVES NO ONE BEHIND⁵¹

- Follow the general principles for a Human Rights-Based Approach to Data collection (HRBAD): participation, disaggregation, self-identification, transparency, privacy and accountability.
- Identify complementary national indicators and related statistical data collection, including context-specific initiatives to capture the situation of particular groups.
- Include a variety of credible data sources, such as citizen-generated data and private sector reporting.
- Build on human rights monitoring mechanisms that provide context-specific analysis and advice, as well as information about vulnerable groups and sensitive issues that are hard to capture through common statistical data.

51. Read more in DIHR 2017, *Human Rights and Data – tools and resources for sustainable development*: bit.ly/humanrights-data

LESSONS LEARNED: THE 2030 AGENDA IN THE HUMAN RIGHTS SYSTEM

MAINSTREAMING HUMAN RIGHTS

The realisation of the transformative 2030 Agenda requires concerted efforts of all actors. In order for the UN System to deliver effective capacity-building support to states, it requires engagement and mainstreaming of a human rights-based approach to implementation across the system, and it requires the UN human rights system to be coherent, collaborative and coordinated.

THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The UN Human Rights Council (HRC) is the main body responsible for human rights in the UN System. The HRC and its mechanisms can provide a substantial contribution to the understanding of and dialogue on human rights and sustainable development. Thereby, the 2030 Agenda constitute a framework for establishing a new comprehensive dialogue and a framework for coherent action.

PRESIDENT OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL INPUT TO HLPF 2016

Inputs from the President of the Human Rights Council to the 2016 HLPF: *The work of the Human Rights Council in relation to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*:

<http://bit.ly/2mrzf75>

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

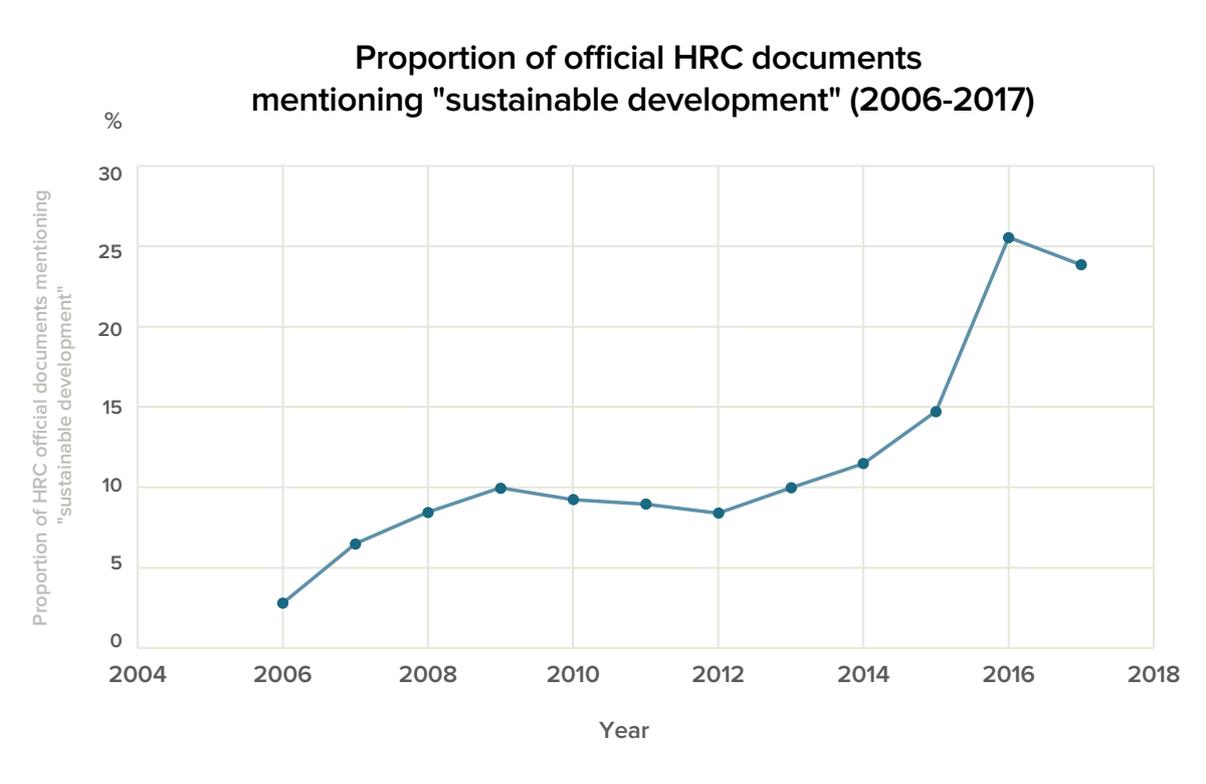
The UN Official Document System (ODS)⁵² can give an insight into the predominant tendencies of the Human Rights Council in terms of directing attention to the theme of sustainable development.

By mapping out the frequency of official HRC documents containing references to “sustainable development”⁵³, a picture can be drawn of how prominently the theme of sustainable development has been addressed in the HRC over the past 10 years.

52. The *Official Document System* (ODS) is an online database of UN documents. The database was first launched in 1993 and updated in 2016. ODS has full-text, born-digital UN documents published from 1993 onward and allows its users to conduct word searches in official UN documents published from 1993 and onward. For more information, see: <https://documents.un.org/>

53. Method: Unite search, Filters: English documents, Human Rights Council, Year. Free text search

AS EVIDENT FROM THE FIGURE BELOW, THE FREQUENCY HAS GROWN SIGNIFICANTLY OVER THE LAST 10 YEARS.

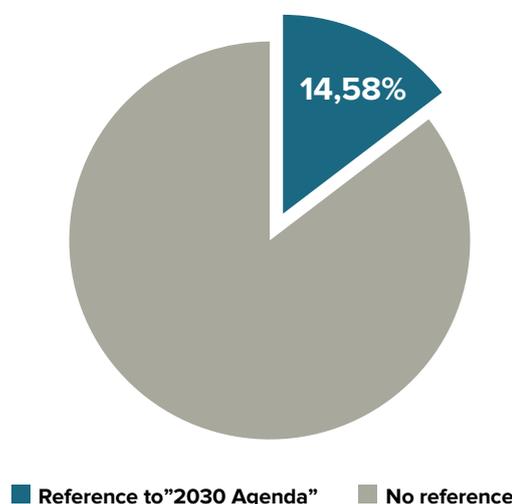


SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL IN NUMBERS

A total of 204 out of 1,399 documents (14.58%) from HRC sessions in 2017 refer directly to the 2030 Agenda in their text.

Sustainable development is thus already a growing factor in the work of the HRC. In order to make sure that this development does not stagnate but turn into actual change in the practice of States and other actors, the UN System can explore ways to further systematise and institutionalise the integration of human rights and the 2030 Agenda in its procedures.⁵⁴

Proportion of Human Rights Council documents containing direct reference to the 2030 Agenda **2017**



PROPOSED ACTIONS FOR THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL TO INTEGRATE THE 2030 AGENDA INTO ITS WORK

An assessment of HRC Resolutions from the 2017 sessions reveals a range of proposed actions to systematically incorporate the 2030 Agenda into the work of the HRC.

Three of the most significant Resolutions from the 2017 sessions of the HRC, which addressed the 2030 Agenda as a whole⁵⁵, highlight the human rights anchorage of the SDGs, promote a human rights-based approach to the implementation and follow-up, and propose specific actions and priorities in order to integrate human rights mechanisms and the 2030 Agenda.

54. Method: Unite search, Filters: English documents, Human Rights Council, Year. Free text search

55. Methodology note: The 36th session of the HRC also included adoption of resolutions that approached the 2030 Agenda with a more narrow focus on e.g. cities. The list provided in the table includes adopted resolutions that takes a systematic approach to the 2030 Agenda as a whole.

34TH - 36TH SESSION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL: ADOPTED RESOLUTIONS ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE 2030 AGENDA

Resolution: 36/29. Promoting international cooperation to support national human rights follow-up systems, processes and related mechanisms, and their contribution to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Resolution adopted by the Human Rights Council on 29 September 2017: <http://undocs.org/A/HRC/RES/36/29>

Proposed priorities and actions

Proposes that **national human rights mechanisms for reporting and follow-up** can contribute to the implementation of the SDGs, and considers the **third cycle of the UPR** as an opportunity to strengthen the engagement of all States in the implementation and follow-up of human rights recommendations;

Recognizes the importance of strengthening capacities and **building synergies at the national level** for the implementation of the SDGs, with due consideration given to **human rights recommendations and standards**;

Requests **OHCHR** to continue to compile and raise awareness of **good practices and lessons learned** on the contribution of national human rights follow-up systems and processes, including of national mechanisms for reporting and follow-up (NMRFs), to the implementation of human rights recommendations and to the achievement of the SDGs.

Resolution: 36/28. Enhancement of technical cooperation and capacity-building in the field of human rights

Resolution adopted by the Human Rights Council on 29 September 2017: <http://undocs.org/A/HRC/RES/36/29>

Proposed priorities and actions

Underlines the importance of further **strengthening policy coherence across the United Nations system** in the delivery of technical assistance pertaining to human rights and the SDGs, with a view to maximizing its impact on the ground;

Decides that the theme for the **annual thematic panel discussion** under agenda item 10 to be held during its thirty-eighth session will be “Human rights and the Sustainable Development Goals: enhancing human rights technical cooperation and capacity-building to contribute to the effective and inclusive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”; ➔

Requests the **OHCHR** to prepare a **report** on how United Nations human rights bodies and mechanisms, including the Human Rights Council, the UPR, special procedures, treaty bodies, United Nations country teams and agencies, can support States in the realization of the 2030 Agenda. The report must be submitted to the Council at its thirty-eighth session to serve as a basis for the thematic panel discussion;

Invites the **UN High Commissioner for Human Rights** to make his next **annual oral presentation** under agenda item 10 (and on an annual basis), on the successes, best practices and challenges in technical assistance and capacity-building efforts provided by the OHCHR and relevant United Nations agencies, with special attention to the attainment of the SDGs;

Calls upon the of involvement of States and **other actors**, including international organizations, intergovernmental bodies, and civil society to make use of the issues raised in the annual panel discussion under agenda item 10, in order to enhance national capacities to promote and protect human rights and support the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Resolution: 34/4. Question of the realization in all countries of economic, social and cultural rights

Resolution adopted by the Human Rights Council on 23 March 2017: <http://undocs.org/A/HRC/RES/34/4>

Proposed priorities and actions

Encourages States to give due consideration to **information, observations and recommendations** from **human rights mechanisms** when implementing and monitoring progress of the 2030 Agenda, and to promote the **cooperation of all stakeholders** towards the full integration of human rights into the said processes;

Underlines the contributions of international human rights mechanisms, including the **Human Rights Council** and its subsidiary bodies, **international human rights treaty bodies**, the **special procedures** and the **universal periodic review** in promoting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in accordance with States' human rights obligations;

Requests the **Secretary-General** to continue to prepare and submit to the Human Rights Council an **annual report** on the question of the realization in all countries of economic, social and cultural rights under agenda item 3, with a special focus on the role of economic, social and cultural rights in the **transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies**.⁵⁶

56. Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies" is the theme for the 2018 HLPF

OTHER RELEVANT HRC RESOLUTIONS ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE 2030 AGENDA FROM THE 2017 SESSIONS:

36/8. The full enjoyment of human rights by all women and girls and the systematic mainstreaming of a gender perspective into the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

(Resolution adopted by the Human Rights Council on 28 September 2017)

<http://undocs.org/A/HRC/RES/36/8>

35/23. The right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

(Resolution adopted by the Human Rights Council on 23 June 2017)

<http://undocs.org/A/HRC/RES/35/23>

34/16. Rights of the child: protection of the rights of the child in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

(Resolution adopted by the Human Rights Council on 24 March 2017)

<http://undocs.org/A/HRC/RES/34/16>

NEXT STEPS: UN SYSTEM CONTRIBUTION TO A HUMAN RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL AS A PLATFORM FOR SHARING EXPERIENCES

In addition to the specific actions proposed in the resolutions from the 2017 sessions, a systematic integration of the 2030 Agenda implementation and follow-up within the existing Programme of Work of the Human Rights Council could provide a platform for sharing of national experiences and best practices on implementation that can feed directly into the Follow up and Review.

Some modalities for this purpose have been suggested:

- Cluster discussions of a group of SDGs each session, e.g. corresponding to the SDGs up for review at HLPF. For 2018, this would be SDGs 6, 7, 11, 12 and 15 (with SDG 17 to be discussed each year);
- General debates under item 6 (Universal Periodic Review);
- General debates under item 10 (Technical assistance and capacity-building). As decided in resolution 36/28, the annual thematic panel discussion for its 38th session under agenda item 10 will be “Human rights and the Sustainable Development Goals: enhancing human rights technical cooperation and capacity-building to contribute to the effective and inclusive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”.

In addition to these recommendations, States could promote certain goals and targets through side events, statements and other initiatives. By the end of each year, all SDGs would have been discussed, and all States provided with a space to share their experiences and lessons learned. These debates could also be arenas for States to make requests for capacity-building and technical assistance, in support of their domestic implementation processes.⁵⁷

MAINSTREAMING HUMAN RIGHTS AND SDGs IN UN DEVELOPMENT OPERATIONS AND COUNTRY TEAMS

In addition to addressing the 2030 Agenda in the HRC and its mechanisms, it is crucial to support integrated implementation of human rights and the SDGs in UN operations on the ground. Some of the key actors in this regard are the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the UN Development Group (UNDG), the UN Statistical Commission, the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and UN Country Teams (UNCTs).

57. *Human Rights & SDGs – Pursuing synergies*, the Danish Institute for Human Rights, the Permanent Missions of Denmark and Chile to the United Nations in Geneva, Universal Rights Group, 2017: <http://bit.ly/2yFfxdM>

THE OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) leverages synergies and facilitates integrated approaches to the realisation of human rights and sustainable development, thereby illustrating the relevance of the UN human rights pillar for the development pillar. OHCHR plays a crucial role in bringing the link between human rights and SDGs to the ground, by leveraging its support to UN presences around the world. OHCHR delivers technical assistance and capacity-building via more than 60 presences around the world, and responds to requests by States in support of their efforts to implement the SDGs and human rights.

THE UN DEVELOPMENT GROUP

The UN Development Group (UNDG) guides, supports and oversees the coordination of development operations in 165 countries and territories. One of the UNDG's strategic priorities is to "Support countries in accelerating the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda"⁵⁸. To this end, the Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support (MAPS) initiative was adopted by the UNDG as a common approach to its support to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda at the country level.

In 2017, UNDG published a guide to country reporting on the SDGs⁵⁹ and a study on tracking and follow-up of human rights recommendation, which points to the potential of linking existing tracking systems with the localization of the SDGs⁶⁰.

58. UNDG, 2017, <https://undg.org/about/undg-global/>

59. UNDG 2017, *Guidelines to support country reporting on the Sustainable Development Goals (2017)*, <https://undg.org/document/guidelines-to-support-country-reporting-on-the-sustainable-development-goals/>

60. UNDG 2017, *UN Country Team Support to Tracking the Follow-up of Human Rights Recommendations*: <https://undg.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/51187-UNDG-HRWG-Study-web.pdf>, p. 20

61. UNDP, 2017, *Rapid Integrated Assessment (RIA)*, <http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/sustainable-development-goals/rapid-integrated-assessment---mainstreaming-sdgs-into-national-a.html>

THE UN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

As the lead UN development agency, the UN Development Programme (UNDP) is uniquely placed to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda through its work in some 170 countries and territories. UNDP provides support to governments to integrate the SDGs into their national development plans and policies, builds capacities of countries, and works with the entire UN System to implement the 2030 Agenda.

UNDP has developed the Rapid Integrated Assessment (RIA)⁶¹ - a tool for supporting countries in mainstreaming the SDGs into national and sub-national planning. The tool provides policy makers with guidance for assessing countries' readiness for SDG implementation by reviewing national plans against the SDGs.

UN COUNTRY TEAMS

United Nations Country Teams (UNCTs) exist in 131 countries and ensure inter-agency coordination and decision-making at the country level. The UNCTs are led by the UN Resident Coordinators, who are the designated representatives of the UN Secretary-General at country level.

In 2016, 88% of UNCTs had mainstreamed human rights into their development plans and programmes with Member States, and human rights was the most frequently addressed normative issue in interagency groups at the country level⁶². Moreover, 70% of UNCTs had included human rights in the Common Country Analysis leading to the definition of the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF). The proactive integration of human rights obligations, and the recommendations of UN human rights mechanisms, into UNDAFs has an enormous potential for ensuring coherence, but also requires guidance, including for Resident Coordinators.⁶³

Some guidance is already available. An example is a short guide by UNDG, which lists ways to provide UNCTs with policy support for integrating human rights into SDG implementation.⁶⁴

62. Summary brief on UN Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs) – Status, trends and next generation, March 2016: <https://www.un.org/ecosoc/sites/www.un.org.ecosoc/files/files/en/qcpr/doco-summary-brief-on-undaf-march2016.pdf>

63. Human Rights & SDGs – Pursuing synergies, the Danish Institute for Human Rights, the Permanent Missions of Denmark and Chile to the United Nations in Geneva, Universal Rights Group, 2017: <http://bit.ly/2yFfxdM>

64. UNDG, 2016: Policy support for UNCTs in integrating human rights into SDG implementation <https://undg.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Policy-Operational-Support-to-UNCTs-on-HR-in-SDG-Implementation-FINAL...-1-1.pdf>

THE DANISH
INSTITUTE FOR
HUMAN RIGHTS