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VNR LABS  
HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM

## 2021 HLPF - VNR Lab

### HOW DO INCLUSIVE VNRs HELP ACCELERATE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2030 AGENDA? EXPERIENCES FROM THE REGIONS

**FRIDAY, 9 JULY, 8:00 - 9:00 am (EST)**

#### Background

Progress in the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs has been significantly hampered in all the regions, and often reversed, by the COVID-19 pandemic. More than one year into the outbreak of the pandemic, countries continue grappling with its impacts, in many cases trapped in a vicious cycle where liquidity challenges, reduced fiscal space and the cost of debt impede many of the investments and stimulus measures that support a strong recovery. Across the regions, the groups that have been most affected by the pandemic are the most vulnerable and neglected before the crisis, in particular women, youth, migrants and persons with disabilities, amongst others.

In this challenging context, the VNRs remain critical tools in tracking progress in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and fostering sustainable development and recovery from the pandemic. During the current HLPF cycle, countries have continued to receive support for the preparation of their VNRs, benefiting from the wealth of knowledge and experiences in each region and the multi-stakeholder Regional Fora for Sustainable Development convened by the Regional Commissions. The VNR preparation processes greatly benefit from the exchange of experience and peer review, technical assistance, analysis of the means of implementation, and work on data and statistics at the regional level, which also contribute to the follow-up and review of the SDGs at the global level.

Broad consultations and multi-stakeholder participation are recognized as key conditions for a successful VNR process and critical in ensuring implementation of plans after the VNRs presentation. Inclusiveness in VNRs is essential to the principles of leaving no one behind and an integrated implementation of the SDGs. Inclusiveness in VNRs also contributes to improved identification of gaps and priorities, allows for leveraging diverse sources of data and analysis, and sets the foundation to build partnerships for implementation. Together with vigorous communication and dissemination strategies, inclusive processes empower citizens and build the capacities of civil society to take ownership and contribute to the review process. Yet, ensuring inclusiveness that is effective and up to standard may come with costs and challenges, and it may be difficult to engage some stakeholder groups.

## Objectives

Following past editions of the VNR Labs organized by the Regional Commissions, the 2021 Lab will continue to build on lessons emanating from VNR preparation processes in the regions, with a focus on:

- 1) identifying innovative approaches in support of inclusiveness and multi-stakeholder participation in the VNR preparatory process and impact this has had on implementation; and
- 2) identifying examples of how the momentum for inclusive engagement was continued after the VNR and HLPF.

The Lab will aim to facilitate a cross-regional learning of innovative approaches and examples of how inclusive stakeholder engagement in the VNR process can accelerate implementation of the 2030 Agenda at the country and regional levels. Drawing on examples from the regions, it will illustrate how inclusive VNRs can be instrumental in maintaining and increasing the level of ambition in second and third generation of VNRs, heightening the impact of the VNRs, and supporting inclusive and sustainable recovery from the COVID-19 crisis. Representatives of VNR participating countries, regional organizations and other stakeholders will be invited to exchange experiences and best practices. In doing so, they will demonstrate how efforts to bring countries together at the regional level have been useful and will continue to be relevant in the context of the Decade of Action.

## Agenda

8:00 Opening remarks, by **Ms. Rosa Malango**, *Director Regional Commissions New York Office, acting as Moderator.*

8:03 Interventions by selected speakers showcasing experiences from the regions:

- **Ms. Joy-Marie King**, *Director of International Trade, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Immigration, Antigua and Barbuda.*
- **Mr. Phurba Phurba**, *Senior Planning Officer, Gross National Happiness Commission, Bhutan.*
- **Ms. Maha Al-Rawi**, *Director-General for Human Development, Ministry of Planning, Iraq.*
- **Mr. Elias Aspudd**, *Former Youth Officer at UN Association of Sweden and Board member of Plan International, Sweden.*
- **Ms. Lauraine Habib**, *Senior Policy Analyst at the Sustainable Development Unit, Egypt.*

8:25 Discussion with participants.

8:35 Second round of remarks by regional stakeholders.

- **Ms. Wardarina**, *Asia-Pacific Regional Civil Society Engagement Mechanism.*
- **Ms. Nelya Rakhimova**, *member of the VNR working group of the Major Group and Stakeholder Coordinating Committee. ECE-Regional Civil Society Engagement Mechanism.*
- **Ms. Amira Albaldawi**, *Head of Um-Al-Yateem for Development Foundation, Iraq.*

8:45 Second round of discussion.

8:58 Concluding remarks by Moderator.