

SUMMARY OF THE 2017 MEETING OF THE HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: 10-19 JULY 2017

The 2017 meeting of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) under the auspices of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) took place from 10-19 July 2017, at UN Headquarters in New York. The meeting focused on the theme of “Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world.” In addition to representatives of Member States, 77 Ministers, Cabinet Secretaries, and Deputy Ministers, and nearly 2500 stakeholders participated.

During the first week, the Forum reviewed progress on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, including at the regional and sub-regional levels. The Forum carried out four thematic reviews related to the 2017 theme on: Addressing multi-dimensions of poverty and inequalities; Multi-stakeholder perspectives; Taking forward the Small Island States Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway; and Countries in Special Situations: Least developed countries (LDCs) and landlocked developing countries (LLDCs), and special challenges of middle-income countries (MICs).

Six Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were reviewed in depth: SDG 1 (no poverty); SDG 2 (zero hunger); SDG 3 (good health and well-being); SDG 5 (gender equality); SDG 9 (industry, innovation and infrastructure); and SDG 14 (life below water). Thematic reviews also took place on two issues related to SDG 17 (partnerships for the Goals): Investing in and financing for SDGs; and Advancing science, technology and innovation (STI) for SDGs. In addition, sessions were held on leveraging interlinkages for effective implementation of SDGs, and science-policy interface and emerging issues. The events of the first week were summarized in a wrap-up session on Friday, 14 July.

The Ministerial Segment convened from 17-19 July, and included 13 sessions where 43 countries presented their Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs). In parallel, a general debate took place, where UN Secretary-General António Guterres’s report on the theme of the 2017 ECOSOC session was presented, along with the Committee for Development Policy’s report. Over the three days, 91 Ministers, and other high-level representatives of Member States, including one Prime Minister, delivered statements as part of the High-level General Debate.

A Ministerial Declaration was adopted during the closing session on 19 July, following votes on two paragraphs: peaceful, just and inclusive societies, with a reference to the removal of obstacles to the full realization of the right of self-determination

of peoples living under colonial and foreign occupation; and means of implementation, including promotion of a universal, rule-based, multilateral trading system. The Declaration was adopted with both paragraphs intact.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE HLPF

The HLPF was called for by the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) in June 2012 in its outcome document, “The Future We Want,” to follow up on the implementation of sustainable development.

UNGA-67: The 67th session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) adopted resolution 67/290 on the format and organizational aspects of the HLPF on 9 July 2013. It decided that the HLPF, consistent with its intergovernmental, universal character, will:

- provide political leadership, guidance, and recommendations for sustainable development;
- follow up and review progress in the implementation of sustainable development commitments;

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- enhance the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development (social, economic, and environmental); and
- have a focused, dynamic, and action-oriented agenda, ensuring the appropriate consideration of new and emerging sustainable development challenges.

The resolutions called for the meetings of the Forum to be convened every four years under the auspices of the UNGA at the level of Heads of State and Government—two days at the beginning of the UNGA session; and every year under the auspices of ECOSOC—for eight days, including a three-day ministerial segment.

Both meetings will adopt negotiated declarations. The Forum, under the auspices of ECOSOC, will conduct regular reviews, starting in 2016, on the follow-up and implementation of sustainable development commitments and objectives, including those related to the means of implementation, within the context of the “post-2015 development agenda.”

FIRST SESSION OF THE HLPF: The inaugural session of the HLPF on 24 September 2013, under the auspices of the UNGA, focused on the theme of “Building the future we want from Rio+20 to the post-2015 development agenda.” Heads of State and Government and Ministers discussed: moving from vision to action; global partnerships for development; and mapping the way forward for eradicating poverty and achieving sustainable development.

2014 SESSION OF THE HLPF: The second session of the HLPF, under the auspices of ECOSOC, convened from 30 June to 9 July 2014, and focused on “Achieving the Millennium Development Goals and charting the way for an ambitious post-2015 development agenda including the SDGs.” A Ministerial Declaration was adopted at the end of the meeting.

2015 SESSION OF THE HLPF: The third session of the HLPF, under the auspices of ECOSOC, convened from 26 June to 8 July 2015, and focused on “Strengthening integration, implementation and review – the HLPF after 2015.” Moderated discussions took place on, *inter alia*, supporting national action through HLPF outcomes; keeping science involved in SDG implementation; tracking progress through existing mechanisms; the HLPF in the next 15 years; reviewing and monitoring progress; and realizing the SDGs. A Ministerial Declaration was adopted at the end of the meeting.

2030 AGENDA: The intergovernmental negotiation process on the post-2015 development agenda included thirteen meetings of an Open Working Group to formulate the 17 SDGs and 169 targets; and a series of eight sessions to develop “Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,” a package that includes a declaration, the SDGs, means of implementation, and a framework for follow-up and review of implementation. The 2030 Agenda, adopted at the September 2015 UN Sustainable Development Summit, calls on the HLPF, under the auspices of ECOSOC, to carry out voluntary, state-led national reviews to provide a platform for partnerships.

2016 SESSION OF THE HLPF: The fourth session of the HLPF, under the auspices of ECOSOC, convened from 11-20 July 2016, focusing on the theme of “Ensuring that no one is left behind.” In addition to moderated dialogues, five sessions focused on the first round of VNRs submitted by 22 countries. A Ministerial Declaration was adopted at the end of the Forum, following a vote on the retention of a paragraph relating to the Paris Agreement on climate change. The Declaration was adopted with the paragraph intact.

HLPF 2017 SUMMARY

ECOSOC President Frederick Musiiwa Makamure Shava, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Zimbabwe, opened HLPF 2017 on Monday, 10 July, and invited Member States to adopt the provisional agenda (E/HLPF/2017/5) for the session. He noted that the HLPF will carry out in-depth discussions on a set of SDGs for the first time.

Highlighting key messages from the UN Secretary-General’s report on progress towards the SDGs (E/2017/66), UN Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs Wu Hongbo said the report uses the global indicator framework developed by the UN Inter-Agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators (IAEG-SDGs), which was just adopted by the UNGA earlier in July 2017.

On behalf of Major Groups and other Stakeholders (MGoS), Vivania Ditukana Tatawaqa, Women’s Major Group, called for reflection on the role of civil society in 2030 Agenda implementation.

Keynote speaker Robert Johnson, Institute for New Economic Thinking, described the new “dangerous discontents” of globalization, calling on them not to direct their discontent at emerging and poor countries.

Keynote speaker Sakiko Fukuda-Parr, The New School, highlighted issues that could compromise SDG implementation, including: inadequate strengthening of data collection capacity; gaps and distortions in the global indicator framework due to limitations in data collection; and lack of balance among the indicators.

IMPLEMENTATION AT THE REGIONAL AND SUB-REGIONAL LEVELS

This session, on Monday, 10 July, was chaired by ECOSOC President Shava.

Noting insufficient progress on a third of the SDGs in the region, Shamshad Akhtar, UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, said baseline data availability varies considerably across the Asia-Pacific region.

Alicia Bárcena, UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, identified progress on, among other matters: creating inter-institutional and inter-sectoral architecture at the highest political levels; strengthening regional architecture; and converting regional forums into multi-stakeholder spaces.

Identifying peace in the region as a global and regional responsibility, Mohamed Ali Alhakim, UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, identified common efforts to address migration, prevent depletion of natural resources, and eliminate barriers to women’s participation in development efforts.

Olga Algayerova, UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), emphasized the need to: consider how SDGs link with existing development plans; tackle persistent gender gaps; and use a sub-regional approach for SDGs that have transboundary dimensions.

Highlighting an annual gross domestic product (GDP) growth of almost 4% from 2010-2015 in her region, Aida Opoku-Mensah, UN Economic Commission for Africa, said challenges include: data gaps; inequality; illicit financial flows; and weak public institutions.

Panelists then discussed the key drivers of change in their respective regions, emphasizing: investments in green technology; human capital development; management of natural resources;

domestic resource mobilization; horizontal and vertical coordination across policy areas and government levels; and multi-stakeholder partnerships.

Shava called for a discussion on lessons learned on means of implementation (MOI) for SDGs in the regions. Panelists noted the need to: leverage private finance; address tax evasion and illicit financial flows; continue to provide official development assistance (ODA); improve investments in research and development; and tap into the opportunities provided by regional economic integration.

In the discussion, participants highlighted, *inter alia*: the challenges of small island developing states (SIDS), including a high rate of indebtedness; sub-regional efforts to promote innovation; and addressing climate change at the regional level. A number of participants emphasized the mutually reinforcing nature of regional visions and the 2030 Agenda, and the role of the regional economic commissions.

A more detailed summary of the discussion is available at: <http://enb.iisd.org/vol33/enb3329e.html>

THEMATIC REVIEW ON ERADICATING POVERTY AND PROMOTING PROSPERITY IN A CHANGING WORLD

Four thematic reviews on the theme of HLPF 2017 took place during the first week – two (on addressing multidimensional poverty and inequalities, and multi-stakeholder perspectives) for three hours each; and two (on the SAMOA Pathway and countries in special situations), for 90 minutes each.

ADDRESSING MULTI-DIMENSIONS OF POVERTY AND INEQUALITIES: Nabeel Munir, Deputy Permanent Representative of Pakistan and ECOSOC Vice President, opened this session on Monday, 10 July. Vikas Swarup, High Commissioner of India to Canada, moderated.

Panelist Sabina Alkire, Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative, introduced the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) and provided examples of how the MPI approach has allowed countries to identify gaps in national policies, budgets, and inter-sectoral coordination.

Panelist Claudia Vasquez Marazzani, Colombia, said the MPI has enabled her government to improve coordination, reduce the rural-urban poverty divide, and anticipate changing poverty levels.

Panelist Anthony Lake, UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), noted that half of all "multi-dimensionally" poor people in the world are children, and called for a renewed focus on better data and equity.

Lead discussant Laura Stachel, We Care Solar, described the efforts of her organization to augment existing healthcare programmes by incorporating the issue of energy access.

Lead discussant Emem Omokaro, African Society for Ageing Research and Development, called for a "life cycle" approach to development that recognizes the importance of social inclusion.

From the floor, participants raised, *inter alia*: the importance of social protection systems as a key instrument for poverty eradication; institutional interventions needed to promote synergies and multiplying effects to eradicate poverty through a multi-dimensional approach; the "incompleteness" of the SDG indicator framework; a rights-based response to economic crises; national strategies for poverty eradication, gender equality, and employment; and the need for gender-disaggregated data to capture individual-level differences in the MPI.

Panelists further raised: the interlinkages between challenges in education, employment, and health, especially for vulnerable youth; the risk of proliferation of different national measures; and the need for a global MPI to complement national MPIs.

A more detailed summary of the discussion is available at: <http://enb.iisd.org/vol33/enb3329e.html>

MULTI-STAKEHOLDER PERSPECTIVES: This session on Tuesday, 11 July, was chaired by Jürgen Schulz, Deputy Permanent Representative of Germany to the UN and ECOSOC Vice President.

Luisa Emilia Reyes Zuñiga, MGoS HLPF Coordination Mechanism, highlighted the role of the Mechanism in ensuring rights of access to, and inclusive participation in, the HLPF are upheld and potentially expanded.

Under-Secretary-General Wu called for the active engagement of all stakeholders to build ownership of the SDGs.

MGoS: Challenges and pathways to eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world: This part of the discussion was moderated by Maruxa Cardama, Cities Alliance.

Wellington Chibebe, for Workers and Trade Unions, highlighted reporting on the SDGs by trade unions to complement VNRs, and stressed the importance of SDGs 1, 3, and 5 for workers.

Sehnaz Kiyamaz, for Women, stressed empowering women and girls affected by conflict, and the need for dedicated funding for gender issues.

As a Member States' respondent, Kenya noted the importance of: international cooperation on trade that allows Africa to finance its needs; national good governance; and inclusion and participation.

Louise Kantrow, for Business and Industry, said a number of companies have already begun to integrate SDGs into their sustainability efforts.

Luis Miguel Etchevehere, for Farmers, highlighted access to innovation to reduce production costs, and better marketing for farm products.

As a Member States' respondent, Indonesia proposed six "I's" for poverty eradication: initiative, intervention, incentive, innovation, including all, and international cooperation.

Noting that persons with disabilities are exposed to multiple forms of discrimination, José Maria Viera, for Persons with Disabilities, urged their inclusion in national poverty reduction programmes.

Roberto Bissio, for the Financing for Development Civil Society Group, stressed that financing must "first do no harm."

Katarina Popovic, Education and Academia stakeholder group, said education remains underfunded despite the importance of SDG 4 (quality education).

During the discussion, participants highlighted: leadership for innovative government; cohesion; involvement of all stakeholders; respect for diversity; inclusion of climate change in VNRs and the HLPF 2017 ministerial declaration; and the need to secure land rights of indigenous peoples.

Leaving no one behind: Ensuring an enabling environment for effective MGoS implementation and monitoring of the SDGs: ECOSOC Vice President Schulz chaired this session. Naiara Costa, Together 2030, moderated.

Saúl Zenteno-Bueno, for Children and Youth, highlighted shadow reports by youth on national implementation, and the importance of peer-to-peer learning.

Rosalea Hamilton, for NGOs, called for a participatory approach to budgeting.

James O'Brien, the stakeholder group of Volunteers, called on governments to reflect on how volunteers can engage in monitoring by citizens.

As a Member States' respondent, Slovenia underlined the role of volunteerism in supporting social cohesion.

Jan van Zanen, Mayor of Utrecht, the Netherlands, underlined that full ownership of the 2030 Agenda at the local level is a decisive factor in ensuring the Agenda's implementation.

John Patrick Ngoyi, Together 2030, called upon the HLPF to establish clear and meaningful mechanisms to collect and analyze reports on the contribution of civil society towards 2030 Agenda implementation.

Keikabile Mogodu, Indigenous Peoples, emphasized that recognition and protection of Indigenous Peoples' rights is central to eradicating poverty.

As a Member States' respondent, Sweden described her country's efforts to bring "the entirety of society" into its VNR process.

In the ensuing discussion, countries and stakeholders raised, *inter alia*, the need to: give due consideration to barriers that prevent lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer persons from active participation in society; effectively monitor progress on secure land rights for women; support faith-based groups to counter narratives of discrimination; promote peer-to-peer learning between local authorities; address the legal problems faced by persons with disabilities; and establish "unusual partnerships" with business.

A more detailed summary of the discussion is available at: <http://enb.iisd.org/vol33/enb3330e.html>

TAKING FORWARD THE SAMOA PATHWAY: This session, on Wednesday, 12 July, was chaired by Cristián Barros Melet, Permanent Representative of Chile to the UN. Penelope Beckles, Permanent Representative of Trinidad and Tobago to the UN, moderated.

Panelist Shahine Robinson, Minister of Labour and Social Security, Jamaica, described the objective and institutional framework of Vision 2030 Jamaica and the importance of high-level engagement and bipartisan support in its realization.

Panelist Tuitama Leao Talalelei Tuitama, Minister of Health, Samoa, described the challenge that non-communicable diseases (NCDs) represent for SIDS, and noted responses, including the Apia Challenge; a forthcoming healthy islands framework; and efforts to amend Samoa's food and tobacco laws.

Discussant Maria Helena Semedo, Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO), outlined the objectives of the Global Action Programme on Food Security and Nutrition in SIDS.

Discussant Paula Vivili, the Pacific Community, described regional initiatives to address NCDs in the Pacific region.

From the floor, participants raised, *inter alia*: the persistent challenge of quality data collection; SIDS' vulnerability to external forces such as global crises, climate events, and unfair trade practices; dedicated support for national statistical systems and offices; and the close link between the SAMOA Pathway and HLPF processes.

Panelists further raised: policies discouraging lifestyles that cause NCDs; and the importance of nutritional education.

A more detailed summary of the discussion is available at: <http://enb.iisd.org/vol33/enb3331e.html>

COUNTRIES IN SPECIAL SITUATIONS: LDCS AND LLDCS, AND SPECIAL CHALLENGES OF MICS: This session, on Wednesday, 12 July, was chaired by ECOSOC Vice President Melet, and moderated by Swarnim Waglé, National Planning Commission, Nepal.

Panelist Amira Gornass, Chair, UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Committee on World Food Security, said investments in smallholder agriculture will benefit SDGs 3, 5, and

13 (climate action) and highlighted the Framework for Action for Food Security and Nutrition in Protracted Crises.

While highlighting Bangladesh's recent graduation to lower-MIC status, panelist Farah Kabir, Action Aid, warned of the "feminization of poverty."

Panelist Nikhil Seth, UN Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), underscored the need for: sub-national engagement; a nexus-approach; stakeholder engagement; and better data and harnessing of technology.

Discussant Masud Bin Momen, Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the UN, underscored: resilience building; migration as a development enabler; and technology, innovation, and data.

Discussant Larisa Belskaya, Belarus, called for greater support for sustainable development in MICs.

Discussant Lazarous Kapambwe, Permanent Representative of Zambia to the UN, identified unemployment as the greatest challenge for LDCs.

During the discussion, participants discussed, *inter alia*: the specific development needs of post-conflict countries; specific challenges of MICs; and the necessity of a global partnership to address security needs.

In closing, panelists stressed: the role of statistical capacity to leverage interventions; action on climate change; and the importance of agriculture.

A more detailed summary of the discussion is available at: <http://enb.iisd.org/vol33/enb3331e.html>

REVIEW OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SDGS

SDG 1 (NO POVERTY): This session, on Tuesday, 11 July, was chaired by ECOSOC President Shava. Carolina Sanchez-Paramo, World Bank Group, moderated.

Highlighting findings from the 2017 Sustainable Development Goals Report, Stefan Schweinfest, Director, UN Statistics Division (UNSD), Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), said that despite progress, three quarters of a billion people still live in extreme poverty, and social protection coverage varies worldwide, missing many vulnerable populations.

Panelist Martin Ravallion, Georgetown University, said while progress has been made in reducing absolute poverty, challenges remain in reducing relative poverty; and better anti-poverty policies are needed to complement economic growth.

Panelist Yang Zhi, Mayor of Jingzhou, China, highlighted China's pledge to lift 70 million out of poverty by 2020, noting efforts to scale up infrastructure investments; strengthen social protection systems; and advance e-commerce networks in villages.

Panelist Yaw Ansu, African Center for Economic Transformation, emphasized the need to improve: access to land and tenure security; productivity on farms; and profitability of agriculture.

Panelist Janet Gornick, City University of New York, highlighted drivers of high poverty levels, including market income inequality and meager state redistribution.

Lead discussant Deborah Greenfield, International Labour Organization, identified decent work and universal social protection as critical drivers of poverty and inequality reduction.

Lead discussant Chibebe, International Trade Union Confederation, highlighted the importance of quality job creation, access to democratic decision-making, and comprehensive social protection systems.

In the discussion, panelists noted, *inter alia*: the need for international cooperation on data collection and analysis to address child poverty; the links between SDG 8 (decent work

and economic growth) and SDG 1; holistic approaches to poverty reduction; education as a catalyst to end poverty; and the unique vulnerability of SIDS.

A more detailed summary of the discussion is available at: <http://enb.iisd.org/vol33/enb3330e.html>

SDG 2 (ZERO HUNGER): This session, on Tuesday, 11 July, was chaired by ECOSOC President Shava and moderated by Gerda Verburg, Scaling-Up Nutrition Movement.

Providing statistics related to SDG 2, Min Yongyi, DESA, noted that while agriculture is an important means to poverty reduction, domestic and foreign investment in agriculture is declining.

Panelist Esther Penunia, Asian Farmers' Association for Sustainable Rural Development, emphasized: access rights to natural resources for the poor; market infrastructure and access; and addressing climate change.

Panelist Elizabeth Mpofu, La Via Campesina, stressed: education; better measures of human progress; and negative impacts of budget cuts on social goals.

Lead discussant Eugenio Diaz-Bonilla, International Food Policy Research Institute, stressed that a universal poverty-based safety net would cost less than 0.1% of world GDP.

Lead discussant Meena Bilgi, Women Organizing for Change in Agriculture and Natural Resources Management, urged identification of emergent challenges in rapid urbanization.

Lead discussant Patrick Caron, Committee on World Food Security, called for local innovation to improve natural resources management and inclusive and cross-sectoral national policies to ensure the right to food.

A number of international organizations called for putting smallholder farmers at the center of food policy to ensure gains made against hunger are secured.

In the discussions, participants raised, *inter alia*: national efforts to address food and nutrition security; gender equality to improve agriculture outcomes; land degradation; a rights-based approach to addressing conflict, natural disasters, and migration; reducing trade barriers; agricultural technology financing for developing countries; and food labeling.

Panelists further noted the need for: sustainable agriculture to be socially just, environmentally sound, and economically viable; a facility to prepare projects with appropriate risk-benefit profile for private sector support; institutional arrangements across levels and between stakeholders that help to break down sectoral barriers; and physically and financially accessible health and nutrition programmes by mainstreaming disability into food security programmes.

A more detailed summary of the discussion is available at: <http://enb.iisd.org/vol33/enb3330e.html>

SDG 3 (GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING): This session, on Wednesday, 12 July, was chaired by ECOSOC Vice President Munir, and moderated by Nata Menabde, World Health Organization.

Providing statistics related to SDG 3, Francesca Perucci, UNSD, highlighted reduced maternal mortality and improved child survival rates, but stressed that rates of progress must increase.

Highlighting that 14 of the 17 SDGs can be linked directly to health, panelist Laura Flores, Permanent Representative of Panama to the UN, urged national sectoral bodies to address these interlinkages.

Panelist Michael Myers, Rockefeller Foundation, called for: deliberate efforts to address equity; addressing future challenges; and collaboration across sectors.

Citing an emerging consensus among policymakers that the current system of biomedical innovation is “deeply broken,” discussant Rachel Cohen, Drugs for Neglected Diseases Initiative, called for: practical approaches to biomedical innovation; and strategies to promote collaboration in science.

Discussant Marie Hauerslev, International Federation of Medical Students Associations, said political will, policy coherence, and investments in health are needed to achieve SDG 3.

From the floor, participants raised the need to: address the interconnections between SDGs 3 and 5; increase public allocation for healthcare; address structural causes of poverty and understand the social determinants of health; recognize silos as a barrier to better health outcomes in SIDS; address NCDs; recognize the role of insurance in facilitating access to health services; ensure data disaggregation based on ethnicity; and address barriers to health services for older persons.

A more detailed summary of the discussion is available at: <http://enb.iisd.org/vol33/enb3331e.html>

SDG 5 (GENDER EQUALITY): Marie Chatardová, Permanent Representative of the Czech Republic to the UN and ECOSOC Vice President, opened this session on Wednesday, 12 July. Craig Mokhiber, Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, moderated.

Providing a statistical update on indicators, Francesca Perucci, UNSD, highlighted: persistence of violence against women; the gap between engagement of women and men in household work; and low representation of women in decision-making.

Panelist Salma Nims, Jordanian National Commission for Women, said fiscal and technical solutions do not necessarily address the power and social relations that hold back women's empowerment and stressed the importance of incorporating gender into planning.

Panelist Jane Sanyu Mpagi, Ministry of Gender, Labour, and Social Development, Uganda, highlighted her country's initiative to make “gender compliance certificates” a prerequisite for obtaining funds from Parliament, and recommended enacting laws and policies that tackle root causes of inequality.

Discussant Roberto Bissio, Third World Institute, highlighted the value of funding to transform previously unpaid care work, and “women-washing” by corporations.

Discussant Nalini Singh, Fiji Women's Rights Movement, stressed the importance of autonomous feminist movements.

In the discussion, participants addressed, *inter alia*: countries' efforts to promote gender equality; laws and policies to protect workers in the formal and informal economy; intergenerational partnerships; measures to combat discrimination, violence, and harmful practices; the importance of sexual and reproductive rights; preventing gender-based violence; the need for gender disaggregated data; and gender as a crosscutting issue throughout the 2030 Agenda.

Panelists further raised the need for: “feminist theory” to address the whole system; and women's involvement in SDG monitoring and implementation.

A more detailed summary of the discussion is available at: <http://enb.iisd.org/vol33/enb3331e.html>

SDG 9 (INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE): ECOSOC President Shava chaired this session, on Thursday, 13 July. Miguel Ruiz Cabañas, Vice Minister for Multilateral Affairs and Human Rights, Mexico, moderated.

Panelist John Danilovich, International Chamber of Commerce, highlighted: policy coherence; trade facilitation reform; finance to enable businesses to access international markets; and harnessing the trade potential of the internet.

Panelist Maria Kiwanuka, Special Advisor to the President of Uganda, highlighted the need to: focus on productive sectors; optimize benefits and reduce delays of infrastructure projects; and balance capital-intensive and labor-intensive innovation.

Panelist Magnus Arildsson, Ericsson, stressed improving knowledge systems to increase food production, and harmonizing technology standards to allow data interoperability.

Providing a global overview of progress towards SDG 9, Min Yongyi, DESA, highlighted: continued concentration of production in a few geographic areas; major investments in transportation and energy sectors; and a 23% increase in value addition in manufacturing between 2005 and 2016.

Discussant Patrick Ho, China Energy Fund Committee, listed infrastructure, technology, and investment as three key elements to achieve SDG 9, saying these elements should promote economic prosperity, equity, and environmental sustainability.

Discussant Arne Holte, World Blind Union, said SDG 9 is the best way to ensure “no one is left behind” if the impacts on all sections of society, including the disabled, are proactively considered during the development of technology, goods, and services.

From the floor, participants raised, *inter alia*: efforts to support start-ups and small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs); the Accelerated Agriculture and Agro-Industry Development Initiative; VNRs as a tool to open dialogue between government and the business community; net neutrality; and the challenge of matching capital to available projects.

Panelists emphasized the need for: concrete examples; local inputs to drive down costs; a focus on farmers in “public-private-producer” partnerships; improved access to global production chains; progress in building internet and transport infrastructure; removal of trade barriers; and the promotion of digital commerce to benefit SMEs.

A more detailed summary of the discussion is available at: <http://enb.iisd.org/vol33/enb3332e.html>

SDG 14 (LIFE BELOW WATER): ECOSOC President Shava chaired this session, on Thursday, 13 July.

Keynote speaker Peter Thomson, UNGA President, called for: implementation of the workplan of the 2017 UN Ocean Conference; collective responsibility to restore the health of oceans; and political momentum.

Calling on donor countries to meet their special commitments to SIDS, keynote speaker Olof Skoog, representing Isabella Lövin, Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate and Deputy Prime Minister of Sweden, and Co-President of the Ocean Conference, said the Conference reflected an innovative North-South partnership model that could be used for other SDGs.

Keynote speaker Luke Daunivalu, representing Josia Voreqe (Frank) Bainimarama, Prime Minister of Fiji, Co-President of the Ocean Conference, highlighted the: high number of voluntary commitments from the Conference that cover all ten SDG 14 targets; limited capacity of SIDS to address threats to oceans; and the need to follow-up on conference outcomes.

Keynote speaker Wu Hongbo highlighted efforts by the UN to prepare a preliminary analysis of nearly 1400 voluntary commitments, and identify synergies with existing partnerships.

Kate Brown, Global Island Partnership, moderated the discussion that followed.

Miguel de Serpa Soares, UN Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs, said UN Oceans, an interagency collaboration mechanism, could play an important role in SDG 14 implementation if sustainable funding is assured.

Providing statistics related to SDG 14, Min Yongyi, DESA, said recent gains in marine protected areas are being jeopardized by climate change, overfishing, and marine pollution.

Panelist Jake Rice, Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Canada, noted there is sufficient knowledge to go from commitments to action, and urged “smarter” use of the oceans.

Panelist Marjo Vierros, Global Ocean Forum, called for participatory and inclusive implementation of SDG 14.

Discussant Ronald Jumeau, Permanent Representative of Seychelles to the UN, called for a strong review mechanism to track progress on the Ocean Conference Call for Action and SDG 14.

Discussant Tui Shortland, Pacific Indigenous and Local Knowledge Centre of Distinction, stressed that indigenous peoples must be acknowledged as primary actors in ocean management and their roles institutionalized.

In the discussion, participants addressed, *inter alia*: national strategies for implementing SDG 14; the importance of the ongoing discussions on marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction; the role of research and scientific knowledge for decision-making on marine and coastal resources; the empowerment of local communities; and the importance of the legal framework provided by the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, including the delimitation of maritime zones.

A more detailed summary of the discussion is available at: <http://enb.iisd.org/vol33/enb3332e.html>

REVIEW OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SDGS AND THEMATIC REVIEW OF SDG 17

This session, on Thursday, 13 July, included two panels, on: investing in, and financing for, SDGs; and advancing STI for SDGs.

INVESTING IN, AND FINANCING FOR, SDGS: ECOSOC Vice President Munir chaired this session.

Keynote speaker Marc Pecsteen de Buytsverve, Permanent Representative of Belgium to the UN, presented the report of the 2017 ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development (E/FFDF/2017/3).

Presenting highlights from the report, keynote speaker Jerry Matthews Matjila, Permanent Representative of South Africa to the UN, emphasized, *inter alia*: gender equality; resilient infrastructure; long-term oriented investments, including in social protection systems; and international efforts to cap illicit financial flows.

Manuel Montes, the South Centre, moderated the discussion that followed.

Presenting key statistics, Stefan Schweinfest, Director, UNSD, said that while ODA rose by 8.9% from 2015 to 2016, bilateral aid to LDCs fell by 3.9%.

Panelist Gebeyehu Ganga Gayito, Deputy Permanent Representative of Ethiopia to the UN, stressed that renewed global commitment and political determination are needed to accelerate implementation of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA).

Panelist Peter Adriaens, Equarius Risk Analytics, identified opportunities to mainstream sustainable development finance, including: focusing on systemic economic development; finding the right financing mechanisms; and re-education and re-training of policymakers.

Panelist Kajsa Olofsgård, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sweden, stressed the importance of multilateralism and inclusiveness.

Noting that public-private partnerships have frequently fostered corruption, discussant Chee Yoke Ling, Third World Network, called for greater UN oversight and norm-setting.

From the floor, participants discussed, *inter alia*: the different financing needs of LDCs and MICs; the second annual SDG Business Forum; South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation; adherence to the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities; the need for an enabling environment to involve youth; policy coherence; and the need for strong language on MOI.

Panelists further called for: effective multilateralism that complements national efforts; transformative partnerships in finance; and national leadership to drive policy coherence.

A more detailed summary of the discussion is available at: <http://enb.iisd.org/vol33/enb3332e.html>

ADVANCING SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION FOR SDGS: ECOSOC Vice President Melet chaired this session, and Susil Premajayantha, Minister of Science, Technology, and Research, Sri Lanka, moderated.

Presenting the Co-Chairs' summary of the 2017 Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the SDGs (STI Forum) (E/HLPF/2017/4), Macharia Kamau, Co-Chair of the STI Forum, said "deep dives" to explore the STI dimension of each SDG are necessary; called for more attention to low-cost, low-technology solutions in line with local realities; and urged support for the Technology Facilitation Mechanism (TFM) to enable its effective functioning.

Vaughan Turekian, STI Forum Co-Chair, highlighted: the importance of the STI Forum in discussing best practices and creating networks between government, the private sector, and academia; the call for a robust science advisory mechanism for the UN Secretary-General; and the need to focus on capacity building.

Panelist Heide Hackmann, Co-Chair of the 10-Member Group of High-Level Representatives in Support of the TFM, identified three priorities: enhanced collaboration within the scientific community; new forms of engagement with policy and public action; and exploiting the potential of big data and machine learning.

Discussant Nebojša Nakićenović, International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis, called attention to cuts in global research funding, and the risk of the marginalization of STI in the sustainable development process.

Discussant Donovan Gutteries, Major Group for Children and Youth, said STI should support the 2030 Agenda and not reinforce existing inequalities.

In the discussion, participants discussed, *inter alia*: digital divides in the availability and affordability of technology; the importance of technology education for young women and girls; the need to ensure technology is environmentally sound; the need for appropriate governance of information and communication technology; the inclusion of women, youth, and people with disabilities in STI; and recognition of the importance of traditional knowledge as complementary to science across all the SDGs.

Panelists further raised, *inter alia*: the need to safeguard the voice of science in times of rising populism; the limited time remaining to build a system to catalyze STI for the 2030 Agenda; and the need to find a "real home" for the private sector at the UN.

A more detailed summary of the discussion is available at: <http://enb.iisd.org/vol33/enb3332e.html>

LEVERAGING INTERLINKAGES FOR EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF SDGS

This session, on Friday, 14 July, was chaired by ECOSOC Vice President Chatardová, and included two panels, on interlinkages and on data and statistics.

INTERLINKAGES: Minh-Thu Pham, UN Foundation, moderated this panel.

Panelist Debapriya Bhattacharya, Centre for Policy Dialogue, urged: exploring intralinkages between targets before considering interlinkages across Goals; consideration of interlinkages in budgetary allocations; and addressing the international systemic dimensions of interlinkages.

Describing the importance of addressing interlinkages in efforts to tackle HIV/AIDS, panelist Michel Sidibé, Joint UN Programme on HIV/AIDS, called for clarity on how the HLPF can facilitate a move away from state-centric approaches to genuine multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder partnerships.

Panelist Charles Arden-Clarke, UN Environment, identified the need to promote policy coherence through inter-ministerial coordination, and make use of integrated funding to achieve intersecting targets for sustainable consumption and production.

Discussant Michael Gerber, Special Envoy for Global Sustainable Development, Switzerland, stressed the integrated nature of the SDGs as an opportunity for policy coherence at all governance levels.

Discussant Irene Khan, International Development Law Organization, underscored the importance of transparent, rule-based processes and mechanisms that ensure appropriate, inclusive, and equitable arrangements for SDG implementation.

In the discussion, participants addressed, *inter alia*: national systems to promote an interlinked approach for implementation of the SDGs; the need to incorporate non-quantitative indicators; the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Policy Coherence for Development framework; interlinkages in the new European Consensus for Development; a "mutual gains approach" that can help to bring together multiple interests and move beyond trade-offs; elimination of systemic and structural barriers; and integration of human rights in follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda.

Panelists further raised, *inter alia*: the need to avoid confusion between processes and outcomes; the importance of addressing stigma, exclusion, and prejudice; the need for high-level coordination of sustainable development efforts at the national level; inclusion of non-state actors in SDG coordination; and persisting confusion about whether interlinkages should be merely aspirational or also measurable.

DATA AND STATISTICS: Debapriya Bhattacharya moderated this panel.

Roberto Olinto, Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics, said data disaggregation is necessary to find the "no one" in the goal of "leaving no one behind."

Judith Randel, Development Initiatives, said disaggregated data sheds light on the different aspects of people's identities and what holds them back.

Anil Arora, Statistics Canada, said national statistics offices bring the statistical rigor that is necessary to generate useful information and called for greater statistical literacy.

From the floor, participants addressed, *inter alia*: the need for international organizations to share best practices on use of

disaggregated data; challenges of inter-ministerial coordination and data collection; and the need for detailed methodological standards that can be harmonized across countries.

Panelists further raised, *inter alia*: the need to ensure that “no national statistics office is left behind”; the importance of investment in data, and of data comparability; and the need to complement big data with “soft” measures such as privacy regulations.

A more detailed summary of the discussion is available at: <http://enb.iisd.org/vol33/enb3333e.html>

SCIENCE-POLICY INTERFACE AND EMERGING ISSUES

The session, on Friday, 14 July, was chaired by ECOSOC Vice President Melet. William Colglazier, American Association for the Advancement of Science, moderated.

Panelist Endah Murniningtyas, National Development Planning Agency, Indonesia, underscored that the Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR) aims to provide an evidence-based instrument to support policymakers in poverty eradication.

Panelist Peter Messerli, University of Bern, recommended: better use of available knowledge; mobilization and innovation of science; and institutionalization of science-policy interfaces at the international level.

Panelist Wang Ruijun, UN Commission on Science and Technology for Development, underscored the need to identify STI capacity gaps for SDGs, especially in developing countries.

Discussant Tolu Oni, University of Cape Town, urged close interaction between academia and policymakers to bridge competing interests and incentives.

Discussant Stuart Taberner, Research Councils UK, recommended mobilizing national research systems to steer science towards generating impact, and towards promoting new skill sets to engage with societal changes.

In the discussion, participants addressed, *inter alia*: evidence-based education policies; the need for greater engagement in, and transparency from, the GSDR process; recommendations from UN Environment’s first Science-Policy Forum; learning from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change’s approach; community-based monitoring and information services as complementary sources of data; and institutionalized spaces for stakeholder engagement in the GSDR.

Panelists also raised, *inter alia*: the interface between traditional and modern knowledge, and science; the generalization and aggregation of knowledge as necessary for implementation of the SDGs; the widening gap between developed and developing countries with regard to new and emerging technologies; and the need for the GSDR process to engage with all UN agencies.

A more detailed summary of the discussion is available at: <http://enb.iisd.org/vol33/enb3333e.html>

WRAP-UP SESSION

On Friday evening, 14 July, ECOSOC President Shava and Under-Secretary-General Wu provided an overview of the first week of HLPF 2017.

Shava noted signs of progress and said that while the week had focused on a limited number of Goals, the indivisible, integrated, and interlinked nature of the SDGs highlights the need for collaborative implementation.

Calling the HLPF “the right platform on the right track” for the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, Wu said the Forum was able to analyze gaps, go beyond sectoral boundaries, and encourage transformative actions.

A more detailed summary of the discussion is available at: <http://enb.iisd.org/vol33/enb3333e.html>

MINISTERIAL SEGMENT

Opening the Ministerial Segment on Monday morning, 17 July, ECOSOC President Shava called for solidarity and cooperation to address key global challenges such as extreme poverty, inequality, conflicts and terrorism, and climate change.

Stressing the 2030 Agenda is “the pathway that will guide humankind to a sustainable way of life,” UNGA President Peter Thomson highlighted the importance of awareness-raising, and a focus on implementation on the ground.

UN Secretary-General António Guterres said the 2030 Agenda could make globalization fair, and outlined key proposals for reform of the UN development system, including: empowerment of resident coordinators; gender mainstreaming in 2030 Agenda implementation; and coherent and accountable funding.

Noting the presence of immense wealth but major inequality in the world, Jeffery Sachs, Earth Institute, Columbia University, identified obstacles to progress, including: vested interests, for instance of the oil, coal, and gas lobbies; “belligerent leaders” that perpetuate conflict; and an absence of “big, bold thinking.”

Shava, along with the ECOSOC Vice Presidents, presented main messages from the previous week. He highlighted: the increasing role of regional cooperation; improvements in inter-sectoral coordination and mainstreaming at the national level; and persistent inequality.

ECOSOC Vice President Chatardová highlighted the value of: multi-sectoral health interventions; legal provisions and institutional frameworks tied to human rights conventions for women’s empowerment; and reflection of interlinkages in budget allocations.

ECOSOC Vice President Melet called for more systemic and systematic cooperation between governments and communities to overcome barriers to financing.

ECOSOC Vice President Schulz encouraged governments to find ways to further incorporate other major stakeholders into the SDG implementation process, including the private sector, farmers, women’s groups, and youth.

ECOSOC Vice President Munir urged acceleration of national efforts and strengthening of international cooperation to support policies and programmes for implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

A more detailed summary of the discussion is available at: <http://enb.iisd.org/vol33/enb3334e.html>

REPORTING BY MINISTERIAL CHAIRS OF THE REGIONAL FORUMS ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT:

This session, on Monday, 17 July, was chaired by ECOSOC President Shava.

Lahcen Daoudi, Minister Delegate to the Head of Government in charge of General Affairs and Governance, Morocco, highlighted poverty eradication, good governance, and equality as priorities for sustainability in the Western Asian region.

Francisco Guzmán Ortiz, Office of the President, Mexico, highlighted key messages from the Latin American and Caribbean region, including on the importance of: poverty eradication; multilateralism; gender equality; and developing indicators for progress on sustainable development that go beyond per capita income.

Rosemarie Edillon, National Economic and Development Authority, the Philippines, noted two key outcomes adopted by the Asia-Pacific region: a regional roadmap for implementing the 2030 Agenda; and a document on the form and function of the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development.

Noting the integrated nature of the 2030 Agenda and the African Union's Agenda 2063, Gervais Meatchi, National Planning Authority, Togo, highlighted the following issues for the African region: integrated approaches; harmonization with national plans; resilient infrastructure; and sustainable use of oceans.

Laurence Monnoyer-Smith, Ministry of Environment, Energy and the Sea, France, said the key issues for the UNECE countries include: adapting the SDGs to the national level; building statistical capacity; and high-level political engagement to integrate the SDGs into existing policies.

A more detailed summary of the discussion is available at: <http://enb.iisd.org/vol33/enb3334e.html>

VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REVIEWS: Forty-three countries presented their VNRs over thirteen sessions during the Ministerial Segment.

Voluntary National Reviews 1: This session, on Monday, 17 July, was chaired by ECOSOC President Shava.

Presenting the VNR for **Luxembourg**, Carole Dieschbourg, Minister of Environment, and Romain Schneider, Minister for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Affairs, outlined the following national priority areas: social inclusion; quality education; decoupling the economy from carbon emissions; improved land use planning; and more effective environmental protection.

Presenting the VNR for **Nepal**, Min Bahadur Shrestha, National Planning Commission, highlighted: the enshrinement of all three dimensions of sustainable development in Nepal's 2015 Constitution; three high-level committees established to promote SDG implementation; progress in promoting gender equality; and challenges related to financing and provincial- and local-level implementation.

Presenting the VNR for **Brazil**, José Antônio Marcondes de Carvalho, Ministry of Environment, Energy, Science and Technology, described the establishment of a 16-member National Commission for the SDGs, with eight members from government and eight from civil society. He welcomed efforts by Brazilian civil society to disseminate and localize the SDGs.

Lead discussant Rita Schwarzelühr-Sutter, Minister for Environment and Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety, Germany, inquired about: multi-stakeholder engagement; how conflicts between different government departments are addressed in SDG implementation; and integration of SDGs into the national budget.

Lead discussant Adil Najam, Boston University, called for bridging the differences in the way donor and developing countries approach SDG 17 in their VNRs, and noted that the HLPF and UN have a key role in ensuring that crosscutting lessons are drawn from the VNRs of different countries.

A more detailed summary of the discussion is available at: <http://enb.iisd.org/vol33/enb3334e.html>

Voluntary National Reviews 2: This session on Monday, 17 July, was chaired by ECOSOC Vice President Munir.

Presenting the VNR for **Monaco**, Serge Telle, Minister of State, described: the allocation of 1.1% of revenue to ODA, focused on LDCs; a focus on healthcare and education as part of his country's global efforts; over-achievement on Kyoto Protocol mitigation targets and a national goal to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050; and national priority areas related to SDG 14.

Presenting the VNR for **Japan**, Fumio Kishida, Minister of Foreign Affairs, highlighted: the establishment of the SDGs Promotion Headquarters; examples of "Public-Private Action

for Partnership" projects; and efforts to promote international cooperation based on the notion of human security.

Presenting the VNR for **Indonesia**, Bambang Brodjonegoro, Minister of National Development Planning, highlighted the adoption of a presidential decree on SDG implementation and the establishment of a National Coordination Team on the SDGs. He said Indonesia's next medium-term development plan will incorporate all SDG targets.

A more detailed summary of the discussion is available at: <http://enb.iisd.org/vol33/enb3334e.html>

Voluntary National Reviews 3: This session, on Monday, 17 July, was chaired by ECOSOC Vice President Melet.

Presenting the VNR for **Costa Rica**, Olga Marta Sánchez Oviedo, Minister of Planning, highlighted a national pact on the SDGs that brings together all three branches of government as well as civil society. She described specific actions taken on zero hunger, health, infrastructure, and marine life.

Presenting the VNR for the **Netherlands**, Lillianne Ploumen, Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation, said her country scores high on welfare, trust in institutions, education, and health but must address greenhouse gas emissions, renewable energy, and the gender pay gap. Martijn Visser, Youth Representative for Sustainable Development, called on his country to prioritize education, climate action, and equality. Eugene Rhuggenaath, Prime Minister of Curaçao, highlighted challenges of SIDS and the importance of SDG 17.

Presenting the VNR for **Bangladesh**, Abul Kalam Azad, Principal SDG Coordinator, noted efforts to mainstream the SDGs by establishing an office to oversee the exercise. Noting coherence between national policies and the SDGs, he said 14 out of the 17 SDGs are thematically aligned and three are partially aligned with his country's 7th Five-Year Plan.

Presenting the VNR for **Kenya**, Irungu Nyakera, Ministry of Devolution and Planning, highlighted the establishment of an interagency technical committee that works with civil society organizations and the private sector, and an SDGs Liaison Office working with sub-national governments. He identified a lack of disaggregated data and inadequate funding as challenges.

Michele Brooks, Purposeful Journey Consulting Group, moderated the question and answer session.

A more detailed summary of the discussion is available at: <http://enb.iisd.org/vol33/enb3334e.html>

Voluntary National Reviews 4: This session, on Monday, 17 July, was chaired by ECOSOC Vice President Melet.

Presenting the VNR for **Chile**, Marcos Barraza, Minister of Social Development, said that while only 11.7% of his country's population are poor in terms of income, 29% of people are in multi-dimensional poverty. He described four priorities in his country's efforts to achieve the SDGs: sustainable and inclusive economic development; reducing inequality; addressing climate change and environmental protection; and bolstering institutions and democracy.

Presenting the VNR for **Malaysia**, Abdul Rahman Dahlan, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department, highlighted: the adoption of a multi-stakeholder participatory governance structure; the organization of a national SDG symposium; studies on data readiness and gaps; development planning mapping exercises involving NGOs and the private sector; and the formulation of a national SDG roadmap.

A more detailed summary of the discussion is available at: <http://enb.iisd.org/vol33/enb3334e.html>

Voluntary National Reviews 5: This session, on Tuesday, 18 July, was chaired by ECOSOC President Shava.

Presenting the VNR for **Belgium**, Alexander De Croo, Deputy Prime Minister, said the SDGs have led to the formulation of an umbrella national development strategy in his country, including a common reporting mechanism. He highlighted four lessons from the process, including the need to: incorporate SDG targets into internal and external policy frameworks; identify areas for further action, such as water and air quality; follow up on, and review, implementation; and invest in awareness raising.

Presenting the VNR for **Benin**, Abdoulaye Bio Tchane, Minister of State for Development and Planning, said his country has identified 49 of the 169 SDG targets as national priorities, and emphasized the importance of an enabling environment. He highlighted areas of progress, including: the drafting of a government action plan; a global survey on food security; and the creation of a “smart” city that allows education, research, and entrepreneurship to flourish.

Presenting the VNR for **Peru**, Javier Abugattás Fatule, President of the Board of Directors of the National Center for Strategic Planning, noted his country’s geographical, topographical, and cultural diversity, and stressed the importance of accounting for this diversity at the local level in implementing the SDGs. He said that while Peru is incorporating the 2030 Agenda into its national policies and plans, it is also projecting a holistic vision to go beyond 2030.

Lead discussant Gilbert Houngbo, International Fund for Agricultural Development, noted challenges in measuring progress against indicators where data is lacking, and underlined the need for resources to build statistical capacity.

A more detailed summary of the discussion is available at: <http://enb.iisd.org/vol33/enb3335e.html>

Voluntary National Reviews 6: This session, on Tuesday, 18 July, was chaired by ECOSOC President Shava.

Presenting the VNR for **Guatemala**, Miguel Ángel Moir Sandoval, Minister of Planning, described his country’s efforts to create a participatory process, raise awareness, and identify priority SDGs. He highlighted the following national challenges: poverty, with 59.3% of the population living in poverty and 23% living in extreme poverty; food insecurity, with 16% of the population suffering malnutrition; gender-related challenges, including violence against women; and the exclusion of indigenous communities.

Presenting the VNR for **Zimbabwe**, Obert Mpfu, Minister of Micro-Economic Planning and Investment Promotion, and Grasiyo Nyaguse, from the same ministry, described efforts to: identify national priorities (poverty reduction, food and nutrition, gender, health, and public administration and governance); integrate the SDGs into national strategies; enhance multi-stakeholder participation at all levels; establish an institutional structure, including the identification of focal points in key ministries and oversight by Parliament; identify targets and indicators, with 2015 as the base year; agree on a development assistance framework with the UN; align budgetary processes; and enhance domestic revenue to implement the SDGs.

Presenting the VNR for **Italy**, Gian Luca Galletti, Minister for the Environment, Land and Sea, highlighted a forthcoming action plan containing quantified objectives for 2030 and said regions and local governments will also define sustainable development strategies. Luca Maestripieri, Directorate General for Development Cooperation, said Italy’s development cooperation goes beyond “traditional areas,” to also support better data, resource mobilization, and private sector involvement. Enrico Giovannini, Founder, Italian Alliance for Sustainable Development (ASviS), highlighted ASviS’ efforts to bring

together over 170 civil society organizations to: report on the state of the SDGs in Italy; make proposals; and organize outreach on the SDGs.

Underscoring “we don’t need resources, we need honesty,” lead discussant Andrés Mideros, National Secretary of Planning and Development, Ecuador, called for addressing tax evasion at bilateral and multilateral levels. He stressed the importance of participatory processes and mechanisms for follow-up of SDGs, and the importance of data.

Lead discussant Jessica Espey, Sustainable Development Solutions Network, provided five recommendations for VNRs: identifying the national stakeholders that have been consulted; setting out how local and regional governments will be engaged; quantifying objectives and thresholds for success; introducing national targets for data investments; and earlier publication, to allow for comments and engagement.

A more detailed summary of the discussion is available at: <http://enb.iisd.org/vol33/enb3335e.html>

Voluntary National Reviews 7: This session, on Tuesday, 18 July, was chaired by ECOSOC Vice President Chatardová.

Presenting the VNR for the **Czech Republic**, Richard Brabec, First Deputy Prime Minister, said the VNR process involved stakeholders for ensuring factual accuracy and wider acceptance. He outlined progress on the 2030 Agenda, including low levels of unemployment, and the lowest number of people threatened by poverty and social exclusion in the EU. Among challenges, he listed climate change, structural barriers to the shift to a low-carbon economy, and the need to increase ODA.

Presenting the VNR for **Jordan**, Imad Fakhoury, Minister of Planning and International Cooperation, said his country is under “economic siege” due to regional instability. He highlighted: the SDG Roadmap adopted by all stakeholders; integration of the SDGs and targets into the country’s three-year executive development plan; and pilot projects in two regions to inform sub-national planning.

Presenting the VNR for **Thailand**, Don Pramudwinai, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Thapana Sirivadhanabhakdi, Thai Beverage Public Company, and youth delegate Potcharapol Prommatat, highlighted: the importance of localizing the SDGs; integration of the country’s Sufficiency Economy Philosophy and the SDGs into national development strategies and budgets; progress on SDG 4; partnerships with the private sector; and the importance of good education for all.

Presenting the VNR for **Argentina**, Gabriela Agosto, National Council of Coordination of Social Policies; with Mabel Bianco, Foundation of Women’s Study and Investigation, and Andrea Avila, Randstad, outlined two stages of work that preceded monitoring of the SDGs: internal prioritization of SDGs; and inter-institutional efforts to select the Goals and indicators. They highlighted the commitment of 10 provinces and the city of Buenos Aires to implement the SDGs, and said their country hopes to have specific data on implementation in 14 of the 23 provinces by 2018.

A more detailed summary of the discussion is available at: <http://enb.iisd.org/vol33/enb3335e.html>

Voluntary National Reviews 8: This session, on Tuesday, 18 July, was chaired by ECOSOC Vice President Schulz.

Presenting the VNR for **Belarus**, Marianna Shchetkina, Council of the Republic of the National Assembly, highlighted several institutional and policy mechanisms, including: a national sustainable development strategy; a programme of socio-economic development; and sector- and region-based

programmes. She noted progress in addressing poverty, food security, decent jobs, and women's empowerment.

Presenting the VNR for **Portugal**, Teresa Ribeiro, Secretary of State of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, highlighted: intra-governmental guidelines for the 2030 Agenda adopted in 2016; the crucial role of Portugal's National Statistical Institute, and Agency for Development and Cohesion; a public consultation process led by civil society; and support for adapting the UN development system to follow up on, and improve effectiveness of, the 2030 Agenda. Mário Parra da Silva, UN Global Compact Network Portugal, introduced Alliance SDGs Portugal, a multi-stakeholder platform that seeks to bring the SDGs and targets "into the real world."

Presenting the VNR for **Uruguay**, Álvaro García, Minister of Budget and Planning, highlighted: the special emphasis on growth and equity; good access to health services; low levels of corruption; and strong social protection systems in his country. He described efforts to: address child poverty; increase market share in agricultural products by further improving phytosanitary measures; reduce suicide rates in the 20-25 age group; pass a bill to reduce gender-based violence; close the infrastructure gap; and increase spending in STI.

A more detailed summary of the discussion is available at: <http://enb.iisd.org/vol33/enb3335e.html>

Voluntary National Reviews 9: This session, on Tuesday, 18 July, was chaired by ECOSOC Vice President Schulz.

Presenting the VNR for **Sweden**, Ardalan Shekarabi, Minister for Public Administration, Carola Lemne, Confederation of Swedish Enterprise, Katrin Stjernfeldt Jammeh, Mayor of Malmö, and Björn Fondén, Swedish Youth Delegate to the UN, highlighted: progress on 49 indicators, including on education, health, and infrastructure; peace and democracy as preconditions for progress; municipal-level efforts to implement the SDGs; the private sector as the bearer of solutions; and the need for young people to be given resources and space in decision-making.

Presenting the VNR for **Nigeria**, Adejoke Orelope-Adefulire, Presidential Senior Special Advisor on the SDGs; Priscilla Achakpa, Civil Society Strategy Group; and Mories Atoki, Private Sector Advisory Group, said that their country's progress on SDGs has been held back by: the economic crisis triggered by the decline in oil prices; the humanitarian crisis in the Northeast; and continued militancy in the Niger Delta. They highlighted progress towards implementation of the 2030 Agenda, including ongoing work on an SDGs needs assessment; and efforts to establish a baseline for tracking performance across national and sub-national government levels.

Presenting the VNR for **Panama**, Maria Luisa Navarro, Vice Minister of Multilateral Affairs and Cooperation, highlighted a sustained reduction in poverty levels, and in rates of malnutrition and hunger, but said that persistent inequality calls for targeted interventions in priority areas. She identified next steps in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, including: closing institutional gaps in human rights-based policies; bolstering a multi-dimensional approach; and strengthening the national statistics system and non-governmental and private sector participation.

Lead discussant László Borbély, State Counsellor, Romania, posed questions to: Nigeria, on the global indicator framework; Panama, on challenges in promoting synergies in SDG implementation, at both the policy and financing levels; and Sweden, on recommendations for mapping and implementing the SDGs.

Reflecting on success factors across VNRs, lead discussant Claire Melamed, Global Partnership for Sustainable Development, highlighted the importance of: robust institutional frameworks at the highest governmental levels as well as local levels; broad social policies, which support a range of people, together with narrow social policies that target individuals; effective economic policies that reduce inequality; and knowledge and data.

A more detailed summary of the discussion is available at: <http://enb.iisd.org/vol33/enb3335e.html>

Voluntary National Reviews 10: This session, on Wednesday, 19 July, was chaired by ECOSOC Vice President Melet.

Presenting the VNR for **Ethiopia**, Yinager Dessie Belay, Minister of the National Planning Commission, said rapid economic growth has led to a reduction in the poverty rate from 44% in 2000 to 22% in 2015. He highlighted progress towards achieving the SDGs, including: integrated measures to build quality infrastructure; investments in renewable energy; continued promotion of industrial development; soil conservation projects; and legislation ensuring land access for rural women.

Responding to questions from Norway, India, Denmark, Sudan, Colombia, the stakeholder group on Ageing, and Persons With Disabilities, Dessie said civil society contributed to a three-layered process of consultation at the local, regional, and national levels, and the Ethiopian Standards Agency has provided disaggregated and timely data.

Presenting the VNR for **Honduras**, Jorge Ramón Hernández Alcerro, Minister Coordinator of the Presidency, outlined criteria for inclusion of Goals in the national SDG agenda: the Goal must be relevant for Honduras, and linked to the country planning system; and the country must possess sufficient resources to implement it. Highlighting progress on SDG 2 and SDG 6 (clean water and sanitation), he said that the adoption of the MPI had complemented income-based assessments.

In response to questions from the stakeholder group on Education and Academia and Colombia, Alcerro discussed: the approval of a new tax code and institution for tax collection; the third Honduras Open Government Partnership plan; and the recent submission of the 2013 MPI baseline.

Presenting the VNR for **India**, Arvind Panagariya, National Institution for Transforming India (NITI) Aayog, said existing national programmes are aligned with the Goals, including those providing: subsidized grain to 800 million people; health coverage to poor households; maternity benefits; financial inclusion; improved infrastructure; and incentives for innovation. Highlighting India's rapid growth as the key instrument for eradicating poverty, he described efforts to involve stakeholders, and identify measurable outcome indicators.

In response to questions from Guatemala, Ethiopia, and Belarus, Panagariya, with other members of his delegation, said India has reduced fossil fuel subsidies, but faces challenges in their elimination; sub-national governments are keenly involved in SDG implementation; and consultations with local bodies and states have been carried out to discuss indicators to monitor progress on SDGs.

Presenting the VNR for the **Maldives**, Abdullahi Majeed, Minister of State for Environment and Energy, noted commitments to mainstream sustainable development and highlighted: the formation of a technical committee for SDG implementation; the development of a monitoring framework, which needs further financial and technical support; and the need for additional efforts on good governance, justice, and economic disparity to consolidate gains.

Responding to questions raised by Singapore, Belize, the Comoros, Norway, and the Scientific and Technological Community, Majeed and his team noted, *inter alia*, the importance of human capital and ongoing efforts to prioritize the SDGs using a consultative process.

Voluntary National Reviews 11: This session, on Wednesday, 19 July, was chaired by ECOSOC Vice President Munir.

Presenting the VNR for **Azerbaijan**, Ali Ahmadov, Deputy Prime Minister, described his country's transformation as a transition from communism to democracy, misery to wealth, and outdated to modern infrastructure. He highlighted state strategies under execution or soon to be initiated, for: the education of women; employment; and improvement of maternal and child health. Among critical challenges to development in the region, he stressed "security, stability, and social cohesion."

Responding to questions from Belarus, Armenia, Children and Youth, and Tajikistan, Ahmadov replied that the conflict in the disputed region of Nagorno-Karabakh represents the greatest obstacle to his country's continued development, and that his country remains a responsible actor in addressing global problems.

Presenting the VNR for **Afghanistan**, Abdul Sattar Murad, Minister of Economy, highlighted an ongoing process of prioritization, alignment, and localization of the SDGs, noting 109 indicators have been divided over eight social and economic sectors. Among challenges he identified a lack of professional and technical capacity, finance, and technology; and conflict and insecurity. Nahid Farid, Member of Parliament, called for gender equality and peace. Zahra Nadiri, Senior Advisor to the President on UN Affairs, underscored Afghanistan's battle against terrorism "on behalf of humanity and UN values."

Responding to the stakeholder group of Volunteers, Murad and his delegation emphasized Afghanistan's women's empowerment programme and highlighted a significant rise in the number of girls going to school.

Presenting the VNR for **Belize**, Omar Figueroa, Minister of State in the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Forestry, the Environment, Sustainable Development and Climate Change, outlined his country's process of SDG prioritization through its Horizon 2030 programme. He highlighted: interventions and constraints to addressing poverty; a determination to extend Belize's national health insurance scheme from 35% to full coverage; the National Gender Equality Policy; and innovative programmes in marine ecosystem management.

Responding to questions from Jamaica, the Maldives, Singapore, and the stakeholder group of Volunteers, Figueroa and his delegation highlighted efforts to ensure a consultative process in development of their country's monitoring and evaluation framework and stressed the importance of creating intra-governmental synergies to ensure efficient use of finances.

Presenting the VNR for **Denmark**, Kristian Jensen, Minister of Finance, discussed an action plan that identifies prosperity, people, planet, and peace as priorities, with partnerships as a crosscutting principle. He stressed the need for further action on sustainable consumption and production, and the integration of marginalized groups. Ida Klockmann, Danish Family Planning Association, called for a gap analysis on all the SDGs and targets, and the integration of human rights. Answering questions posed by Indonesia, Jamaica, Estonia, NGOs, and Ethiopia, Jensen and his team noted the need for: multi-stakeholder forums; data availability; specific actions to promote social mobility; and learning and evaluation.

Voluntary National Reviews 12: This session, on Wednesday, 19 July, was chaired by ECOSOC Vice President Munir.

Presenting the VNR for **Togo**, Prime Minister Komi Sélom Klassou said that the SDG targets are prioritized to align with national objectives, the Economic Community of West African States Vision 2020, and Agenda 2063. He outlined his country's plans to: establish agricultural hubs to consolidate self-sufficiency and improve agricultural trade balance; become a logistics hub in the sub-region; and formulate a strategy for growth of the blue economy.

Presenting the VNR for **Cyprus**, Nikos Kuyalis, Minister of Agriculture, underscored that despite an unprecedented economic crisis, his country remains "on a good course" to meet the SDGs. He highlighted the introduction of a national healthcare system that will improve utilization of resources and quality of care, and reduce inequality. Sotiris Themistokleous, Center for the Advancement of Research and Development in Educational Technology, stressed that corporate social responsibility can be a medium for the private sector to engage with SDGs in Cyprus.

Lead discussant Risto Artjoki, State Secretary, Ministry of Finance, Finland, identified VNRs as key tools for stakeholder engagement, stressing the importance of involving youth, women, the scientific community, and parliamentarians in particular. He asked Togo about administrative reforms deemed necessary to implement the 2030 Agenda, and encouraged continued structural reforms in Cyprus.

Lead discussant Emele Duituturaga, Pacific Islands Association of Non-Governmental Organizations, said leaving no one behind boils down to "space, voice and resources." While welcoming efforts by Togo and Cyprus to engage stakeholders, she cautioned that marginalized groups may not have been reached. She called for ECOSOC guidelines for citizen engagement that draw on inputs from MGoS, and for publication of shadow NGO reports on the UN website.

On questions raised by Morocco and Volunteers, Prime Minister Klassou emphasized the importance of: making results visible; tackling cultural barriers; preventing gender equality; and the critical role of infrastructure.

On questions raised by the stakeholder group of Volunteers, Denmark, Indonesia, Slovenia, and Morocco, Kuyalis and his team described efforts to: increase the participation of women in public life; promote environment-friendly marine aquaculture; support SMEs; make results visible; tackle cultural barriers to gender equality; and address infrastructure needs.

Voluntary National Reviews 13: This session, on Wednesday, 19 July, was chaired by ECOSOC Vice President Munir.

Presenting the VNR for **Botswana**, Slumber Tsogwane, Minister of Local Government and Rural Development, described three guiding principles for development of his country's national roadmap: coordination, implementation, and data use. Highlighting the national poverty eradication programme, he stressed its focus on the poorest segment of the population, the 6.4% of people who live on less than US\$1.25 per day. Tsogwane underscored that linkages between poverty eradication and other Goals and targets, such as those related to good health and nutrition, are necessary to facilitate his country's development trajectory.

In response to a question from Workers and Trade Unions, Tsogwane said that his country's national steering committee includes unions.

Presenting the VNR for **Qatar**, Saleh bin Mohammed Al-Nabit, Minister of Development Planning and Statistics, highlighted the Qatar National Vision 2030, adopted in 2008,

which rests on the four pillars of human, social, economic, and environmental development. He noted less than 1% youth unemployment, high levels of internet access, and the government's emphasis on quality education.

Responding to Children and Youth and Persons with Disabilities, Qatar highlighted: 20% of revenue set aside for the education sector; an "unshakable commitment" to SDGs 5 and 7 (affordable and clean energy); and a ministry that addresses persons with disabilities.

Presenting the VNR for **Slovenia**, Alenka Smerkolj, Minister for Development, Strategic Projects and Cohesion; Kamal Izidor Shaker, Member of Parliament; and Albin Keuc, Sloga Platform, noted: the decision to embed the SDGs into the country's new development framework rather than design a separate parallel process; inclusion of the human right to water in the Constitution; and the need for policy coherence and civil society empowerment.

Responding to the Czech Republic, the United Arab Emirates, and the stakeholder group on Ageing, Slovenia highlighted: a focus on women's empowerment and children's well-being in development assistance; and a consultative process to develop Slovenia's development strategy. Sabina Carli, UN Youth Delegate of Slovenia, stressed the importance of ensuring the government's doors remain open in the SDG implementation process, and urged citizens "to go knock on them as loud as you can" if they are closed.

Presenting the VNR for **Tajikistan**, Nematullo Hikmatullozoda, Minister of Economic Development and Trade, highlighted the synergies between the 2030 Agenda and national plans, including the National Development Strategy 2030 and the Mid-Term Development Plan 2020. He noted the need for greater financial investments in securing clean and safe water and called for international partnerships.

Responding to questions raised by Pakistan, the Russian Federation, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Belarus, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, and Afghanistan, Hikmatullozoda highlighted the role of inter-ministerial coordination in the achievement of the SDGs; and his country's support for inclusivity and broad participation in SDG implementation.

Presenting the VNR for **El Salvador**, Jaime Miranda, Vice Minister for Development Cooperation, said the government has prioritized nine Goals and 117 targets. Among key elements of progress in implementation of the 2030 Agenda, he cited: political leadership at the highest level; establishment of a national sustainable development agenda; technical coordination among the implementation team; and alignment with national development priorities. Miranda stressed that adaptation of the 2030 Agenda to the national context is a "means, not an end."

Responding to questions from Belgium and NGOs, Miranda underscored that inclusion is a fundamental principle in his country's five-year education plan.

GENERAL DEBATE: During the General Debate, 91 Ministers, and other high-level representatives of Member States, including one Prime Minister, delivered statements each afternoon during the three days of the Ministerial Segment. The statements can be viewed at: <http://bit.ly/2tiDPZk>

Introduction of Secretary-General's Report on the Overall Theme of the Council's 2017 Session: This session, on Monday, 17 July, was chaired by ECOSOC Vice President Chatardová.

Under-Secretary-General Wu highlighted findings from two reports of the UN Secretary-General: "Eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, through promoting sustainable development, expanding opportunities and addressing related challenges" (E/2017/64), which describes systemic challenges and

key policy actions for eradicating poverty; and "Beyond gross domestic product: multi-dimensional poverty and the Sustainable Development Goals" (E/2017/69), which provides an overview of national approaches to addressing multi-dimensional poverty. He also highlighted the 2017 World Economic and Social Survey (E/2017/50), underscoring that the global economic situation remains a challenge for achieving the 2030 Agenda.

José Antonio Ocampo, Chair of the Committee for Development Policy (CDP), discussed findings from the 2017 Report of the CDP (E/2017/33), and said the Committee is approaching poverty reduction from the angle of building productive capacities in countries that have graduated, or are graduating, from LDC status.

A more detailed summary of the discussion is available at: <http://enb.iisd.org/vol33/enb3334e.html>

CLOSING PLENARY

The HLPF closing plenary began at 5:30 pm and was chaired by ECOSOC President Shava.

Expressing gratitude to Jan Kickert, Permanent Representative of Austria to the UN, and Courtenay Rattray, Permanent Representative of Jamaica to the UN, for their work on the draft Ministerial Declaration, Shava invited Member States to consider the draft. Urging a spirit of consensus, he emphasized that the declaration will not encroach upon the primacy of the 2030 Agenda.

Shava then noted Israel's request to hold a vote on paragraph 4 (on peaceful, just and inclusive societies, with a reference to the removal of obstacles to the full realization of the right of self-determination of peoples living under colonial and foreign occupation) of the draft declaration.

Israel said his country requested the vote because the declaration should focus on unifying and actionable messages, and the HLPF should not become another "battleground."

After 104 Member States voted to retain the paragraph, with eight against and 48 abstentions, the paragraph was retained.

Shava then noted that a vote on paragraph 21 (MOI, including promotion of a universal, rule-based, multilateral trading system) had been requested by the US.

After 112 Member States voted to retain the paragraph, with one against and 46 abstentions, the paragraph was retained.

Explaining his country's vote, Mexico noted support for the paragraph as it contains fundamental principles of international trade. He called for future HLPF sessions to adopt brief, actionable declarations that increase ambition.

Noting his country's abstention, Canada, speaking together with Australia and New Zealand, said while meaningful trade liberalization is essential, the paragraph does not recognize the role of domestic resource mobilization, and innovation driven by the private sector. Japan noted his country's abstention because the paragraph was not balanced and focused too much on financial models.

Shava then invited Member States to adopt the Ministerial Declaration, as orally amended (E/HLPF/2017/L.2). The Declaration was adopted without objection.

During the statements that followed, Ecuador, for the Group of 77 and China (G-77/China), regretted that the Ministerial Declaration does not include: acknowledgement that responsibility for economic and social development of a state falls on the state itself; the need to have a supportive international enabling environment, including a supportive trade system; reference to the commitment of 0.7% official development assistance/gross national income (ODA/GNI), with 0.2% ODA/

GNI directed to LDCs; reference to necessary tangible actions to establish a broad consultation process; an action-focused monitoring and review section; and acknowledgment that the current global trends will make it impossible to eradicate poverty by 2030.

Estonia, on behalf of the European Union, regretted that the text lacks mention of the root causes of migration, despite evident linkages between migration and sustainable development. He opposed selecting some targets for close examination and not others, and stressed that targets 5.3 (eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation); 5.6 (ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences); and 5A (undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws) are integral for overall development, and achievement of the Goals.

Barbados, for the Caribbean Community, supporting the G-77/China, said the Declaration is not perfect, but best reflects consensus after weeks of consultations. He noted the importance of the HLPF to SIDS, saying it provides the only opportunity for SIDS to review implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and the SAMOA Pathway.

Australia, also for Albania, Andorra, Iceland, Monaco, and New Zealand, said the language on SDG 5 in the Ministerial Declaration departs from commitments under the 2030 Agenda, omitting several key elements. She underlined that joining consensus on the Declaration does not indicate an acceptance of the weakening of commitments on this Goal.

Canada, also expressing concern on the omission of language on SDG 5 and its targets, underlined that his country joined consensus on the understanding that the Declaration does not encroach on the primacy of the 2030 Agenda.

The US underlined that the Declaration is non-binding under international law. Explaining her country's votes, she said the US supported Israel on the deletion of paragraph 4 and regretted the attempt by certain states to politicize sustainable development. On paragraph 21, she said the US does not view the UN as an appropriate forum to opine on the World Trade Organization, which is an independent body. Noting that US policies are currently under review, she said her country could not affirm support for all areas of the 2030 Agenda. She also noted the US President's indication that the US will withdraw from the Paris Agreement, saying that while support may be possible under new terms in the future, the US is ceasing implementation of its Nationally Determined Contribution under the Agreement. She also expressed disappointment that trafficking in persons was not referenced in the Declaration.

Switzerland explained his country's abstention on the votes, saying it was based on general disapproval of voting in this Forum, as it dilutes the strong political signal needed from the HLPF.

Morocco expressed regret that language on the need to respect the territorial integrity of states was not included in the Declaration.

The Russian Federation lamented efforts to reinterpret the integrated nature of the SDGs, and cautioned that repeated voting

would have a negative impact on the Forum as the main platform on sustainable development.

Venezuela stressed the sovereign right to manage natural resources and opposed coercive unilateral trade measures.

France noted that all rights should be enjoyed by all, and not just a few.

The UK expressed disappointment with language on gender, and said the Ministerial Declaration should not be a vehicle to renegotiate high-level agreements through the back door.

Maldives, for the Alliance of Small Island States, emphasized the importance of a universal approach to addressing common challenges and noted the centrality of the HLPF for the SAMOA Pathway.

Referring to a letter submitted by his country to the ECOSOC President on Azerbaijan, Armenia lamented the "distortion of facts" and "propaganda" in a country's VNR.

Iran said that follow-up of development objectives in his country will be in accordance with national laws and legislation, development priorities, and cultural values.

The Holy See said his country does not consider abortion, or access to abortion, to be an element of sexual care services.

Viet Nam expressed concern over language in paragraph 8 (climate change) and said it contains concepts that have not been fully clarified.

Norway regretted that the text did not contain more explicit language on the importance of gender equality, and shared concerns that paragraph 21 does not reflect the "delicate balance" achieved in the AAAA.

Israel disassociated itself from paragraph 4.

Nigeria regretted the "weak and imbalanced" language on illicit financial flows, and called for enhanced diligence and cooperation to prevent, detect, and deter the international transfer of products of crime.

In his closing statement, Under-Secretary-General Wu noted that the HLPF is fulfilling its role as a central global platform for review and follow-up of SDGs, while offering a space for exchanging experiences, peer learning, and lessons learned. He said its success demonstrates that multilateralism is very much alive, and the UN is still relevant.

Noting the Ministerial Declaration provides political guidance, Shava underscored that the 2030 Agenda seeks to promote fair globalization. He said the 43 VNRs presented at the Forum had demonstrated political will for evidence- and science-based decisions to implement the 2030 Agenda at the national level.

He gavelled the meeting to a close at 7:49 pm.

FINAL OUTCOME: Emphasizing the centrality of the HLPF in overseeing follow-up and review at the global level, the Ministerial Declaration on the themes of "eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world" and "eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions through promoting sustainable development, expanding opportunities and addressing related challenges," *inter alia*:

- reiterates the commitment to end poverty, promote sustained inclusive and sustainable economic growth, foster peaceful, just and inclusive societies with access to justice and respect for human rights, and promote full gender equality by tackling all legal, social and economic barriers;
- underlines the necessity of investing in youth by addressing multi-dimensional deprivations, calls on parties to the Paris Agreement and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change to implement commitments, and urges actions to promote inclusion and pluralism in cities;

- stresses the importance of policy coherence and enabling environments to build synergies across Goals and indicators; and
- recognizes the specific and common challenges faced by LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS, while noting the serious challenges within many MICs.

On the report of the Secretary-General on the progress made towards achieving the SDGs, Member States acknowledge insufficient and uneven progress across many targets and the need for further efforts by all.

Having reviewed SDGs 1, 2, 3, 5, 9, 14 and 17 this year, Member States acknowledge the need to leverage synergies and co-benefits while minimizing trade-offs, and stress:

- the need for a multi-dimensional approach in efforts to eradicate poverty;
- poverty as the principal cause of hunger and the need for sustainable food systems that are resilient;
- the importance of investing in health by building resilient health systems, including preparedness to respond to epidemic outbreaks;
- the need to address the slow progress in women's representation in leadership and management level positions and to implement the other SDGs in a manner that delivers results for women and girls;
- the necessity of ensuring access to those without access to electricity, clean water, sanitation, and the internet and the role sustainable industrialization can play in the structural transformation of economies; and
- the adverse impacts of climate change on oceans, and underline the commitments expressed in the outcomes of the UN Ocean Conference.

Noting the "challenging" global environment and its impact on national efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda, Member States call for a stronger commitment to partnership and cooperation together with coherent policies and an enabling environment at all levels by all actors.

The Ministerial Declaration further:

- commends the countries that conducted the VNRs, urges all to make use of the lessons learned from the review process to enhance implementation and invites Member States to consider presenting their VNRs in 2018;
- welcomes the adoption of the global indicator framework, stresses the need for coordinated collection, analysis, dissemination and use of statistics and high-quality, accessible, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, sex, age, race, ethnicity, migration status, geographical location and other characteristics; and notes the need to build capacity; and
- recognizes the role of the UN in supporting countries' efforts in implementing the 2030 Agenda and look forward to the options and proposals by the Secretary-General in making the UN more fit for purpose to deliver.

A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF HLPF 2017

Like the legend of the phoenix

All ends with beginnings

- Daft Punk

Since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals in September 2015, the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development has become the central intergovernmental platform for follow-up and review of the world's ambitious and universal new roadmap to end poverty,

protect the planet, and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity. The HLPF was established in 2012 to replace the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), whose systemic shortfalls on the fronts of monitoring sustainable development implementation, integrating the three dimensions of sustainable development, and responding to emerging issues rendered it incapable of effectively addressing the sustainable development challenges of the 21st century. Against the backdrop of high poverty and "astounding inequality," growing instability, and a dangerously warming world, at HLPF 2017 many wondered if the Forum is up to the task of confronting today's considerable sustainable development challenges head-on? In the words of the French electronic music duo Daft Punk, is the "HLPF at five" "*harder, better, faster, stronger*" than its predecessor?

This brief analysis contemplates this question across three dimensions, considering the extent to which HLPF 2017 succeeded in: offering robust follow-up and review of the SDGs; catalyzing national implementation; and providing the necessary political leadership and guidance to spur momentum for sustainable development. It concludes by considering whether the Forum is moving in the right direction, or is repeating the mistakes of its predecessor.

FOLLOW-UP AND REVIEW

Work it harder, make it better

Do it faster, makes us stronger

- Daft Punk

This year, for the first time, the HLPF focused on reviewing the implementation of a subset of six Goals: SDGs 1 (no poverty); 2 (zero hunger); 3 (good health and well-being); 5 (gender equality); 9 (industry, innovation and infrastructure); and 14 (life below water). A seventh, SDG 17 on partnerships for the Goals, is being reviewed each year. The HLPF tackled these wide-ranging and complex SDGs across seven two-hour sessions on the Goals, with only 90 minutes on the critical SDG 17 theme on investing in and financing for SDGs. This format seemed to undermine the notion that the SDGs represent an integrated Agenda that is designed to help break down silos. Realistically, however, a focus on a smaller number of Goals may be the only way for the Forum to consider the sweeping 2030 Agenda in any depth during the time allotted over the limited eight days that the HLPF is mandated to meet.

Even a dedicated session on interlinkages did not give participants the chance to break down silos, hone down on specifics, or disentangle complexities, such as the finer differences between "coordination," "coherence," "interconnections," and "interlinkages." Despite these limitations, delegations recognized again and again that the world's new development agenda is integrated, interlinked, and ultimately indivisible.

More problematic was the issue of how much can be substantively discussed in the short space available, with Member States, Major Groups and other Stakeholders (MGoS) and international organizations struggling to make interventions in the limited time that followed the panel presentations. Several sessions had to end before everyone on the speakers list had a chance to be heard; more often than not, it was the voices of civil society that were excluded. Yet, other sessions seemed to run out speakers before running out of time.

This challenge was particularly palpable when it came to consideration of SDG 17, where the session on investing in, and financing for, SDGs left countries and stakeholders with a minute

each to share experiences, raise questions, and respond to one another in a meaningful way on this “trillion dollar question.” The format drew considerable ire from several developing country delegates, with at least one vowing to write a letter of complaint on what he perceived to be unacceptable neglect of so fundamental an issue.

For many, the “tired” format of 16 thematic panel discussions, followed by largely pre-written interventions, also evoked a sense of “déjà vu,” with a number of sustainable development veterans recalling similar discussions under the CSD.

With outgoing Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs Wu Hongbo noting all participants would receive a survey to evaluate the meeting and make recommendations for future HLPF sessions, participants had already started to muse over whether there are any alternative formats available to allow the Forum to maintain and harness the energy and excitement on which SDG implementation will depend. One civil society representative, for instance, emphasized a need to ensure outcomes that can be brought back to the national level, for example through a summary of lessons learned through the VNR processes. Another observer called for elevating the thematic discussions politically through ministerial roundtables on major and emerging issues.

Meanwhile, several recent “out of the box” international meetings, including the May 2017 UN General Assembly’s SDG Action Event on Innovation and Connectivity, which took a “TED talk” approach, demonstrate the UN’s ability to do something different. While this Action Event’s clarion call to “embrace innovation” to achieve the SDGs focused on developments in the private sector, perhaps its main message about embracing innovation should also inspire change within the UN system.

CATALYZING NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION

*Write it, cut it, paste it, save it,
Load it, check it, quick – rewrite it.
- Daft Punk*

HLPF 2017 was also the second year that countries presented their VNRs, or what one delegation termed “a selfie” of progress towards SDG implementation.

Forty-three countries presented VNRs at this meeting: close to double the number that presented at HLPF 2016. This unanticipated popularity caused some logistical and planning challenges, and left little time for interaction during the discussions. NGOs also struggled to complete their own reviews of governments’ performance, so-called “shadow VNRs,” in time for the meeting.

On the positive side, the universal nature of the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda was reinforced by the presentation of VNRs by countries at all levels of development. As a developed country noted while presenting their Review, “all countries are developing countries in the context of the VNRs.” Most of the VNRs were presented by Ministers, indicating the national importance that is attached to the process. The Ministers represented multiple portfolios, suggesting that the SDGs have managed to engage multiple sectors, and enabled the realization, after many years, that the sustainable development agenda is much more than just the environmental pillar.

The fact that some delegations presenting VNRs included stakeholder representatives was a positive feature. Stakeholders were also able to ask questions on the VNRs—although time was sometimes limited for meaningful responses. The number of MGoS represented at HLPF has also expanded since the CSD

days—there are now groups representing persons with disabilities, older persons, and others. This has already had an impact on both the dialogue and the process, for example, through the inclusion of subtitles and sign language on video screens in most sessions.

The importance of civil society as “advocates, implementers, and watchdogs” of SDG implementation, monitoring and evaluation was given voice during the VNRs. Compared to the previous year, a notable rise in the engagement of MGoS in the VNR process was illustrated by a swathe of reports, including complete “shadow VNRs” to counter the formal reviews; score cards of performance on specific issues, such as the inclusion of stakeholders; and reviews from specific perspectives (for example, how countries scored on the 2030 Agenda’s environmental dimensions).

In their interventions, several MGoS offered some hard-hitting remarks, challenging assertions by their governments that civil society had been consulted in the SDG “nationalization” and VNR processes; raising “sore points” such as regression by some countries on official development assistance targets and their tax havens status; and protesting instances where interventions from MGoS were passed over during some VNRs, although it was not entirely clear whether this had occurred mainly due to time constraints.

POLITICAL MOMENTUM

*More than ever
Hour after hour
Work is never over
- Daft Punk*

HLPF 2017 took place in the context of what UN Secretary-General António Guterres termed a “paradoxical” political climate, where, as one panelist said, the “dangerous discontents” of globalization are increasingly skeptical of the merits of ever-closer international cooperation, even as challenges such as conflict, mass migration and breaching of climate tipping points call for concerted multilateral responses. Globalization’s “mixed record” was also highlighted by Jeffrey Sachs, Director of Columbia University’s Earth Institute, who called for “big, bold thinking” in the face of today’s “stunning and unprecedented inequality,” where eight men own as much wealth as half the world’s population combined.

As Guterres highlighted, the 2030 Agenda can in many ways be a roadmap to provide the “fair” and sustainable globalization that the world needs. But did HLPF 2017 deliver the requisite political signal in this direction?

The message to emerge from both HLPF 2017’s key political outcome document—the Ministerial Declaration—and the process leading to its adoption, presented a picture that was, at best, equivocal. Some countries sought to renegotiate hard-fought elements of the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda in the Declaration, such as women’s rights, sexual and reproductive health and rights, and female genital mutilation, to name a few. In the words of one delegate, the Ministerial Declaration should not become an effort to amend the Agenda “through the back door.”

Two issues—occupied territories and the multilateral trade system—were put to vote. While the Declaration was adopted with both paragraphs receiving overwhelming support, a number of countries abstained from voting, protesting that the voting process itself diluted a strong political signal from the HLPF.

A number of countries then sought to clarify that they joined consensus on the Ministerial Declaration only following reassurance by the President of ECOSOC that the Declaration in

no way represents a renegotiation of the 2030 Agenda. The US went so far as disassociating itself from the paragraph on climate change, and suggested that its support of the entire Agenda may be in question.

The negotiation of the draft declaration began weeks before the HLPF session, making it almost impossible to reflect the outcomes of the discussions during the meeting itself. This leaves an opening for countries to try and renegotiate the entire 2030 Agenda. As Mexico suggested in the closing session, the Declaration should perhaps be a short and sharp recognition of the challenges that arise as implementation unfolds, instead of a renegotiation or even reiteration of agreed principles.

RETHINK, INNOVATE, RECALIBRATE

So let's raise the bar

And our cups to the stars

- Daft Punk

While HLPF 2017 formally ticked all the boxes of the Forum's mandate, including completing a review of seven SDGs; presentation of 43 VNRs; and adopting a Ministerial Declaration, both the format and execution of these exercises seemed lackluster and wanting in the urgency and leadership that the 2030 Agenda and the state of the world today seem to demand.

Yet, progress in some areas is visible. As the VNR presentations showed, from the local, to the national, to the regional levels, institutions, processes, policies and programmes are being put in place for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Civil society is organizing and galvanizing around the Goals, holding their governments to account on what is essentially a self-assessment process. While perhaps not the sexiest of topics, progress has also recently been made on the critical issue of data and indicators, allowing for more robust assessments of how countries are faring towards SDG achievement as time progresses. The repeated call from civil society organizations for disaggregated data to track progress in a more fine-grained manner also seems to be gaining increased acceptance.

But it is important to remember that these are early days. This may have been the fifth session of the HLPF, but this was only the second since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda. The VNR and SDG review processes are therefore both in their "teething phases," with potential for improvement as the Forum matures. While the HLPF session in 2019 has the mandate to revise certain aspects of the Forum, the opportunity to rethink, innovate and recalibrate even in 2018 is wide open.

Experiences at HLPF 2017 suggest it will be critical for Member States, together with the UN system and MGoS, to seize this opportunity and redouble their efforts to ensure the Forum helps to bring the SDGs home. As underscored by a representative of the Alliance of Small Island States during the closing plenary: "The year 2030 will arrive whether we are ready for it or not."

UPCOMING MEETINGS

2017 World Water Week: World Water Week is the annual focal point for the world's water issues, bringing together experts, practitioners, decision-makers, business innovators, and young professionals from a range of sectors and countries. In 2017, World Water Week will address the theme of "Water and Waste – Reduce and Reuse." **dates:** 27 August -1 September 2017 **location:** Stockholm, Sweden **contact:** Stockholm International Water Institute **www:** <http://www.worldwaterweek.org/>

Fourth International Marine Protected Areas Congress:

Organized by the Government of Chile, IMPAC4 will focus on the theme, "MPAs: Bringing the ocean and people together." The Congress will convene scientists and practitioners to discuss topics relevant to MPAs, including conservation, ecology, fisheries, climate change, monitoring, enforcement and management tools, and communication and education. **dates:** 4-8 September 2017 **location:** La Serena-Coquimbo, Chile **email:** impac4@mma.gob.cl **www:** <http://impac.mma.gob.cl/>

22nd Session of UN World Tourism Organization General Assembly:

The 22nd UNWTO General Assembly will take place during the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development, as designated by UNGA (A/RES/70/193). The International Year aims to support a change in policies, business practices, and consumer behavior towards a more sustainable tourism sector that can contribute to the SDGs. **dates:** 4-9 September 2017 **location:** Chengdu, China **contact:** UNWTO **phone:** +34-91-567-8100 **fax:** +34-91-571-37-33 **email:** omt@unwto.org **www:** <http://lmd.unwto.org/event/general-assembly-twenty-second-session-0>

UNGA High-level Meeting on UN-Habitat: UNGA President Peter Thomson will convene this High-level Meeting to discuss the effective implementation of the New Urban Agenda and the position of the UN Human Settlements Program (UN-HABITAT). The event is expected to bring together mayors, community administrators, city resilience leaders, and other stakeholders to focus on implementation of SDG 11. **dates:** 5-6 September 2017 **location:** UN Headquarters New York **contact:** UNGA President's Office **www:** <http://www.un.org/pga/71/event/latest/high-level-meeting-on-new-urban-agenda-and-un-habitat/>

72nd Session of the UN General Assembly: UNGA 72 will convene at UN Headquarters on 12 September 2017. The General Debate will open on 19 September 2017. **dates:** 12-25 September 2017 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **contact:** UNGA President's Office **www:** <http://www.un.org/en/ga/>

Climate Week NYC 2017: The 9th annual Climate Week NYC will take place during the UNGA General Debate. It will showcase the role that non-state actors are playing in ensuring the successful implementation of the Paris Agreement and the achievement of the SDGs. **dates:** 18-24 September 2017 **location:** New York City, US **contact:** The Climate Group **email:** info@theclimategroup.org **www:** <https://www.theclimategroup.org/ClimateWeekNYC>

Fifth Annual International Conference on Sustainable Development (ICSD): The Fifth Annual ICSD will take place on the theme, "The World in 2050: Looking Ahead for Sustainable Development." The 27 conference topics will cover all 17 SDGs and a number of cross-cutting issues, including data, the role of universities in achieving the SDGs, and the arts as a tool to raise awareness of the SDGs. **dates:** 18-19 September 2017 **location:** Columbia University, New York City, US **contact:** ICSD **email:** info@ic-sd.org **www:** <http://ic-sd.org>

International Conference on Sustainable Development

Goals: Actors and Implementation: This conference is aimed at creating a permanent and multidisciplinary knowledge network on the implementation of the SDGs. It will be organized by the Global University Network for Innovation (GUNI), an international network created in 1999 and supported by the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the UN University (UNU) and the Catalan Association of Public Universities (ACUP). **dates:** 18-19 September 2017 **location:** Barcelona, Spain **contact:** GUNI/ACUP **phone:** +34-93-

581-7099 **email:** info@guninetwork.org **www:** <http://www.guninetwork.org/events/international-conference-sustainable-development-goals-actors-and-implementation>

UN Private Sector Forum 2017: The 2017 Forum will focus on the theme of “Financing the 2030 Agenda.” The annual Forum aims to bring the voice of business to intergovernmental debates, and to enable CEOs, heads of state and government, and UN and civil society leaders to explore partnerships. **date:** 18 September 2017 **location:** New York City, US **contact:** UNPSF Secretariat **email:** unpsf@unglobalcompact.org **www:** <https://www.unglobalcompact.org/take-action/events/1051-united-nations-private-sector-forum-2017>

Global Compact Leaders’ Summit 2017: The 2017 Summit aims to inspire leadership for the SDGs. It will chart the way ahead for increased public-private collaboration, unveil the UN Global Compact’s latest intelligence from Action Platforms, generate engagement opportunities around the SDGs, and celebrate ambitious leaders and innovators from around the world with 2017 Pioneers, Project Breakthrough, and the Global Opportunity Explorer. **date:** 21 September 2017 **location:** New York City, US **contact:** UN Global Compact **email:** leaderssummit@unglobalcompact.org **www:** <https://www.unglobalcompact.org/take-action/events/leaders-summit-2017>

World Health Summit: The ninth World Health Summit will address “Science – Innovation – Policies.” Central topics to be addressed include: Health Policy in the G7/G20; Global Health Security; Healthy and Resilient Cities; Vaccination and Eradicating Disease; New Frontiers in Health Services; and Big Data for Health Governance. **dates:** 15-17 October 2017 **location:** Berlin, Germany **www:** <https://www.worldhealthsummit.org/whs-2017.html>

Third Meeting of the UN Environment Assembly: UNEA 3 will be held, on an exceptional basis, from 4-6 December 2017, with the high-level segment taking place on 5-6 December, and the Open Ended Committee of Permanent Representatives from 29 November to 1 December. **dates:** 4-6 December 2017 **location:** Nairobi, Kenya **contact:** Jorge Laguna-Celis, Secretary of Governing Bodies **phone:** +254-20-7623431 **email:** unep.sgb@unep.org **www:** <http://www.unep.org/environmentassembly/>

Eleventh World Trade Organization Ministerial Conference: The topmost decision-making body of the WTO, the Ministerial Conference, usually meets every two years. The conference will bring together all members of the WTO and can make decisions on all matters under any of the multilateral trade agreements. **dates:** 10-13 December 2017 **location:** Buenos Aires, Argentina **contact:** WTO Secretariat **phone:** +41-22-739-5111 **email:** enquiries@wto.org **www:** https://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/minist_e/mc11_e/mc11_e.htm

First Global Conference of the Platform for Collaboration on Tax: The members of the Platform for Collaboration on Tax (UN, International Monetary Fund, Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, World Bank Group) will hold their first Global Conference on the theme of “Taxation and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs),” to take forward the global dialogue on the role of tax in achieving the SDGs, and to seek country insights on relevant challenges and opportunities. The conference will use as an input the work developed by Platform members, both jointly and separately, in connection with the themes covered in the conference. **dates:** 14-16 February 2018 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **www:** <http://www.worldbank.org/en/programs/platform-for-tax-collaboration>

World Water Forum 2018: The World Water Forum is the world’s largest water event that gathers international stakeholders every three years and aims to set water firmly on the international agenda. The World Water Forum is organized by the World Water Council, an international multi-stakeholder platform that aims to promote awareness, build political commitment and trigger action on critical water issues at all levels, including the highest decision-making level, to facilitate the efficient conservation, protection, development, planning, management and use of water in all its dimensions on an environmentally sustainable basis for the benefit of all life on earth. **dates:** 18-23 March 2018 **location:** Brasilia, Brazil **contact:** World Water Council **phone:** +33-4-91-99-41-00 **email:** wwc@worldwatercouncil.org **www:** <http://www.worldwatercouncil.org>

Annual ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development follow-up (FfD Forum): This Forum addresses the follow-up and review of Financing for Development Conference outcomes and the means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. **dates:** 23-26 April 2018 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **contact:** UNDESA **email:** halka@un.org **www:** <http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/ffdforum/>

HLPF 2018: The sixth HLPF, convening under the auspices of ECOSOC, will address the theme of “Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies.” The Forum will also review Goals 6, 7, 11, 12, and 15, as well as Goal 17, which is reviewed every year. **dates:** July 2018 [*tentative*] **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **contact:** UNDESA **email:** <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/contact/> **www:** <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf>

For additional meetings, see <http://sd.iisd.org/>

GLOSSARY

AAAA	Addis Ababa Action Agenda
CSD	UN Commission on Sustainable Development
DESA	UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs
ECOSOC	UN Economic and Social Council
GDP	Gross domestic product
GSDR	Global Sustainable Development Report
HLPF	High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development
LDCs	Least developed countries
LLDCs	Landlocked developing countries
MGoS	Major Groups and other Stakeholders
MICs	Middle-income countries
MOI	Means of implementation
MPI	Multidimensional poverty index
NCDs	Non-communicable diseases
ODA	Official development assistance
SAMOA Pathway	SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action Pathway
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SIDS	Small island developing states
SMEs	Small- and medium-sized enterprises
STI	Science, technology and innovation
UNECE	UN Economic Commission for Europe
UNGA	UN General Assembly
UNSD	UN Statistics Division
VNR	Voluntary National Review