

1. INTEGRATING VNR FINDINGS INTO NATIONAL GOVERNMENT ARCHITECTURE

What Is It?

In examining the integration of VNR findings into national government architecture, this section will discuss: 1) national SDG coordination mechanisms and how they have strengthened institutions; 2) national budgets and how they can be aligned with the SDGs through transparent and inclusive processes; and 3) how SDG 16-specific VNR recommendations have been deliberated and advanced through line ministries and government departments. In so doing, it looks at national and subnational implementation with a view to SDG 16 principles and targets and its linkages to national development plans, action plans, strategic plans and sector strategies.⁴²

Integration, through a whole of government and a whole-of-society approach, is central to the 2030 Agenda and the achievement of the SDGs. As highlighted by

Global Alliance's 2019 SDG 16+ Report

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SDG 16 (as all other SDGs) requires countries to strengthen context-specific, SDG mechanisms to coordinate, collect data, plan, monitor efforts and support the delivery of outcomes.⁴³ Some countries establish such mechanisms within existing institutions or ministries; others create new ones.

UNDP's flagship support for

Integrated National Financing Frameworks

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(INFFs) is designed to help policymakers map the landscape for financing sustainable development and to lay out a strategy to increase and make the most effective use of investment for sustainable development and the achievement of their national development priorities and the SDGs across all sources of finance. In partnership with UN Agencies, the IMF and the EU, UNDP is leading technical support to develop INFFs in 58 countries.

In some instances, efforts to link national budgets with the SDGs and specific SDG outcomes started soon after the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, drawing from lessons from the MDGs and tracking public expenditures in support of sectoral objectives in both developing and developed countries, as relevant. That being said, in general,

the integration of SDGs into actual national budget processes

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has thus far been limited.⁴⁴

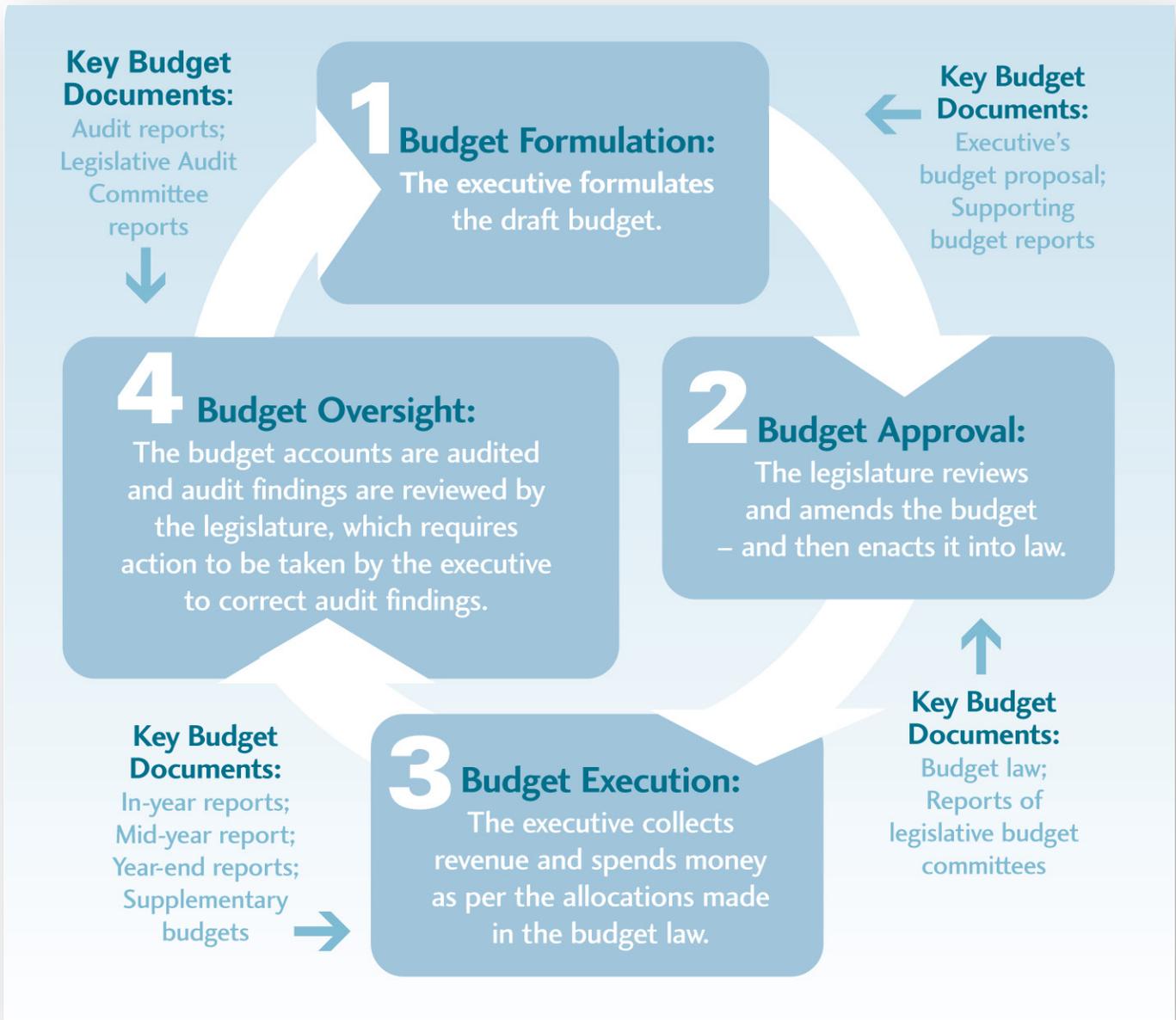
While there can be significant variance in how governments integrate and take forward VNR findings, the case studies and guidance below reflect how SDG coordination mechanisms and budgets can strengthen SDG 16 advancement. They also highlight specific actions taken by governments and partners to implement SDG 16-related policies and programming related to and following from a VNR.

42 Various UN Sustainable Development Group approaches and tools, such as "MAPS" (**M**ainstreaming, **A**cceleration, **P**olicy **S**upport) and "RIA" (**R**apid **I**ntegrated **A**ssessment), are designed to help mainstream the SDGs into national and subnational planning, including as related to reporting.

43 Global Alliance (2019). *Enabling the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda Through SDG 16+: Anchoring Peace, Justice and Inclusion*, p. 50.

44 UN DESA (2019). World Public Sector Report: Sustainable Development Goal 16: Focus on Public Institutions, p. xv.

<https://publicadministration.un.org/Portals/1/Images/WorldPublicSector/World%20Public%20Sector%20Report%202019.pdf>



Why Is It Important?

Coordination structures bring together government institutions



bring together government institutions and incorporate the SDGs into integrated policies and corresponding budget lines, with actions attributable to the responsible ministries, departments and agencies.⁴⁵ As such, coordinating bodies or structures provide an opportunity for collaboration, dialogue and knowledge-sharing

across institutions and sectors, policy cycles and levels of government (e.g., regional or local governments). Further, when coordination is designed with clear roles and responsibilities, ministries and government departments are better held to account in translating the VNR into political action, policy or programming. This, in and of itself, is SDG 16 in practice.

Coordinating structures increasingly include civil society, national human rights institutions and other stakeholders.

⁴⁵ UN DESA: Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government (2018). Compendium of National Institutional Arrangements for implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/22008UNPAN99132.pdf>

National Mechanisms

for Review and

Follow-Up

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(NMRFs) are an example of a key coordination body, specifically a national public structure that is mandated to coordinate and prepare reports for and to engage with international and regional human rights mechanisms.⁴⁶

While

increased stakeholder

participation

www

may, at times, slow processes, experience shows that inclusive structures enhance accountability, trust and, ultimately, performance.⁴⁷ When a VNR is part of a nationally owned, inclusive and participatory process, effectively integrating VNR findings into national architecture through transparent and multi-stakeholder processes strengthens more responsive and more accountable institutions (SDG 16.6).

In terms of budgets, even

the most well-intentioned public policy

has little impact unless it is matched

with sufficient public resources

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⁴⁸ National budgets are governments' most powerful economic tool to meet the SDGs and the needs of its people, including those most at risk of being left behind. In most countries, the⁴⁹

budget process includes four stages

budget formulation, approval,

execution and oversight

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Different actors, including legislators, auditors, civil society organizations, citizens, the media and donors, play different roles in determining budget decisions, implementation and outcomes. Transparency is also key in budgeting processes. As emphasized by the

Inter-Agency Task Force on

Financing for Development

in 2017

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“stronger implementation of transparency and public participation in the budgeting process can improve the effectiveness of public finance”.⁵⁰ Budgets do feature in some VNRs but ideally should feature prominently to transparently describe how they are prioritizing budgets for the 2030 Agenda, to fund to various SDG initiatives as well as how they are working across the ministries to maximize the impact of public resources. Specifically, countries can

highlight budget amounts

that are linked to

the policies

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listed in their VNRs.⁵¹

When advancing VNR findings and recommendations for strengthened SDG 16 implementation, whether related to peace, justice or inclusion, such action should be integrated as explicitly as possible with existing national planning and priorities. This also holds true for related frameworks or multi-stakeholder dialogue processes, such as the

International Dialogue

on Peacebuilding

and Statebuilding

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46 OHCHR (2016): *National Mechanisms for Reporting and Follow-up. A practical guide to effective state engagement with International Human Rights Mechanisms*. https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/HR_PUB_16_1_NMRF_PracticalGuide.pdf

47 Cázarez-Grageda, K. (2018). *The Whole of Society Approach: Levels of engagement and meaningful participation of different stakeholders in the review process of the 2030 Agenda*, p. 8. Partners for Review and GIZ.

48 TAP Network (2019). *SDG Accountability Handbook: A Practical Guide for Civil Society*, p. 19. <https://sdgaccountability.org/sdg-accountability-handbook/>

49 TAP Network (2019). *SDG Accountability Handbook: A Practical Guide for Civil Society*, p. 19.

50 UN Interagency Task Force on Financing for Development (2017). Report: *Financing for Development: Progress and Prospects*, p. 2. https://www.un.org/pga/71/wp-content/uploads/sites/40/2017/06/Report_IATF-2017-min.pdf

51 Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (2020) Assessment of ASEAN Countries' Concrete SDG Implementation Efforts: Policies and Budgets Reported in Their 2016-2020 Voluntary National Reviews. <https://www.iges.or.jp/en/pub/asean-sdg-vnrs/en>

or the⁵²

Open Government Partnership



To this end, government leadership and clearer attention should be placed on connecting national SDG reports, VNRs, human rights reporting, the data that is derived from each and how they link to national development plans and policies. As highlighted by UNDP's⁵³

Voluntary National Reviews

and National SDG Reports



Overview Report (draft)

while constituting two specific outputs, they (national SDGs reports and VNRs) should be seen a part of a larger and longer-term process leading towards the achievement of the SDGs.⁵⁴

The integration of VNR findings into NDPs' priorities and policies specifically in the (mid-term or final) review of the national plans in a coordinated manner and from a human-rights-based approach, not only strengthens implementation but increases the potential for policy cohesion across sector pillars.

How Can This Be Used?

More than

half of the 2019 VNR

countries



(47 in total) set up new institutional structures often through a multi-stakeholder SDG commission, council, working group or task force. These usually consisted of line ministries, national statistical commissions and other stakeholders such as civil society, academia, the private sector and local and regional governments.⁵⁵ A review of the

2018 VNRs



by Partners for Review shows that 31 of the 46 VNRs mentioned existing or new councils/committees to oversee SDG implementation.⁵⁶

Coordinating bodies or structures vary in form and composition, but are often led or housed within a ministry or the executive office and at times include national statistical offices, NHRIs and other independent equality bodies, civil society, the private sector and other non-state actors. Coordinating bodies are often responsible for coordinating the development of national SDG implementation plans and/or integrating SDG implementation into existing plans. This may also entail

maintaining timeframes, defined

responsibilities for government



actors and institutions,

and transparent deliverables subject to regular reporting.⁵⁷

An integrated approach between different national coordinating bodies, with clear roles and responsibilities,

52 International Dialogue on Peacebuilding & Statebuilding. Home Page. <https://www.pbsbdialogue.org/en/> and the Open Government Partnership. Home Page <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/>

53 UNDP (2017). Voluntary National Reviews and National SDG Reports: Overview report to guide their preparation.

54 The SDGs are often monitored and reviewed both through National SDGs Reports (NSDGR) and the VNR. The NSDGR is primarily intended for a country to guide its own implementation and monitoring. The VNR, rather, is part of the formal intergovernmental and international monitoring and peer learning process.

55 UN DESA (2019). HLPF 2019 Voluntary National Reviews Synthesis Report, p. 18.

https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/252302019_VNR_Synthesis_Report_DESA.pdf

Since the early 2000s, Germany, for example, had institutionalized mechanisms to coordinate government activity and engage with other stakeholders on sustainable development. After its 2016 VNR, however, it established an annual Sustainability Forum as an arena for multi-stakeholder dialogue organized by the Chancellery (Head of Government).

56 Global Alliance (2019). *Enabling the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda Through SDG 16+: Anchoring Peace, Justice and Inclusion*, p. 52.

57 TAP Network 2030. SDG Accountability Portal: Connecting with Designated Government SDG Bodies and Ministries.

<https://sdgaccountability.org/working-with-government-institutions/connecting-with-designated-government-sdg-bodies/>

including for the National Mechanism for Reporting and Follow-Up (NMRF) on human rights, for example,⁵⁸

has been deemed a

good practice

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(More on linkages with human rights mechanisms can be found in Chapters 9 and 12.) Interministerial and interagency mechanisms are often critical to integrated planning, budgeting and financing.

The SDGs Council, Georgia: An Evolving Tool in Intergovernmental Coordination, Implementation and Multi-stakeholder Inclusion⁵⁹

In 2017 and after its 2016 VNR, Georgia created the SDGs Council to facilitate SDG implementation and monitoring. It is chaired by the Head of the Administration of the Government, co-chaired by the UN Resident Coordinator and reports to the Prime Minister. In 2019, the SDGs Council was separated from the Public Administration Reform Council and was established as an independent entity, allowing for a stronger mandate and a more inclusive, data-driven approach to implementation and monitoring. The below briefly details the SDGs Council's evolution for stronger impact.

Since 2017, the Council has grown to include over 15 public institutions, including deputy ministers from all relevant line ministries, state agencies, mayors and elected co-chairs of thematic working groups from civil society. In addition, parliamentary committees, UN Agencies and other International Organizations (IOs) may be asked to participate, though without the right to vote.

The Council's coordination mechanism operates through a three-part structure: the Council itself, the Secretariat (the Policy Planning Unit within the Administration), and four Working Groups: Economic Development, Democratic Governance, Social Inclusion and Sustainable Energy and Environment Protection. In addition to changing the Council's composition, the 2019 mandate updated the Working Groups' operational methods to be more inclusive, with chairs or co-chairs having stronger advocacy and decision-making roles. Co-Chairs include civil society, the UN and public institutions. (Working Groups also include the private sector, academia and other IOs.)

Further, the Council now draws its data from the SDGs National Document (the Matrix) and the Electronic Monitoring System (EMS). The Matrix reflects global and Georgia-adjusted targets and indicators, baseline indicators, data sources, and the responsible entity. The SDGs Matrix also includes scorecards. Through EMS, launched in 2019, ministries are directly informed should they fall behind.

In terms of policy, the Council can now make recommendations to line ministries and others, with EMS providing a concrete monitoring instrument. Recommendations are often tied to the national Policy Development and Coordination System, with further links made to Georgia's Public Administration Reform efforts.

The updated SDGs Council played a crucial role in Georgia's 2020 VNR. The Secretariat acted within its new mandate to coordinate the process. Working Groups provided information and recommendations to the draft documents and, after several rounds of review, the Council, defined as a political decision-making body, adopted the final version of Georgia's 2020 VNR.

58 SDG Knowledge Platform. HLPF 2020 VNR Lab Event: "Aligning reporting processes: Voluntary National Reviews and international human rights mechanisms". <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&type=20000&nr=7031&menu=2993>

The National Mechanism for Reporting and Follow-Up (NMRF) on human rights can systematically collaborate with and contribute to national SDG implementation and reporting mechanisms or processes. They can also be included as members of coordinating bodies.

59 This case study is based on interviews with the Policy Planning Unit within the Administration of the Government of Georgia.

The SDGs Council, Georgia: An Evolving Tool in Intergovernmental Coordination, Implementation and Multi-stakeholder Inclusion, cont.

Take-aways and Recommendations: A clear division of labor and mandates, with proper civil society engagement, ensured a whole-of-society and whole-of-government approach to Georgia's 2020 VNR, focused on progress and accountability. Since 2017, an annual SDGs Council meeting has also allowed Council members to share in SDG implementation-related experiences. **Going forward**, it is important to establish wide-reaching communication mechanisms. To this end, the draft 2020 VNR was shared online and Georgians were encouraged to comment. As a result, the Secretariat received about 200 comments from 20+ stakeholders.

While not without structural and functional challenges, overall,

VNR preparation has increased
government actors' awareness
of the 2030 Agenda

helping to define roles across government in advancing the SDGs.⁶⁰ Multi-stakeholder dialogues further help to maintain policy continuity, particularly during changes in government.

In terms of budgets and SDG integration and alignment, according to the

2019 World Public Sector Report

national SDG budgeting can range from supplying basic information on SDG targets and related budget allocations to “fully-fledged SDG-based budget classification systems that can drive budget prioritization, decision-making, execution, monitoring, audit and accountability processes”.⁶¹

As highlighted in the World Public Sector Report, there is increasing awareness within the international community of the value of establishing “strong linkages between national budget processes and other key elements of the chain that links visions, strategies and plans, to public spending and development outcomes”. However, not all countries can be expected to adopt

ambitious SDG budgeting on a systemic basis in the medium or longer term, even if interested, given political, administrative and technical constraints. One key factor, however, comprises specific and tailored public finance management reforms, often linked to SDG 16, and how these can be used to support SDG implementation and monitoring overall. Currently, it is more likely that governments focus on specific SDGs when aligning their budgets, taking a more ad hoc rather than an Agenda-wide approach.

60 For more on how structural and functional aspects may promote or prevent coherent implementation and review, see report: Cazarez-Grageda, K. (2019). Partners for Review 2019 analysis on the Whole of Government Approach and 2030 Agenda National Coordination Structures. <https://www.partners-for-review.de/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Whole-of-Government-P4R-Discussion-paper-2019.pdf>

61 UN DESA (2019). World Public Sector Report: Sustainable Development Goal 16: Focus on Public Institutions, p. 95.

Mexico: Aligning Budgets with the SDGs and SDG 16 for longer-term National Planning

As noted in the *2019 World Public Sector Report*, Mexico “stands out as having moved the farthest in terms of mapping the SDGs into its national planning and budgeting processes”.⁶² Mexico’s efforts to integrate the SDGs into its national strategies and plans started in 2016, shortly after the adoption of the 2030 Agenda. The *Ministry of Finance and Public Credit*, which oversees the development of national and sector plans, in partnership with *UNDP and the Office of the Presidency*, which is responsible for national SDG implementation, developed a methodology to monitor and evaluate the performance of the national budget in contributing to the SDGs.⁶³

The first step was to **identify links between sectoral strategies and the SDGs’ 169 targets**. Based on these links, the Ministry of Finance then identified budget programmes related to each SDG target.

The analysis was reviewed and validated by line ministries. Initial results indicated the need for more disaggregated information to assess the specific contribution of each budget programme to the related SDG target(s), as different budget and sector programmes contribute to the different aspects of each target.

In 2017, the Ministry of Finance integrated the methodology into the 2018 Budget Statement of the Executive Budget Proposal. This brought in the IT systems for budget preparation, which included a module for linking budget programmes with SDG targets or sub-targets and tracking budget execution. Complementary fiscal transparency measures were also adopted, such as integrating a summary of the methodology into the Citizen Budget and publishing the results of this exercise in open data.

According to *Mexico’s 2018 VNR*, in the 2018 federal budget, 80.7 percent of Budgetary Programmes (BPs) were connected to the 2030 Agenda, while 156 of the 169 SDG indicators are connected to at least one BP.⁶⁴ The vast majority of these programmes are linked in some way to SDG 16.



62 UN DESA (2019). World Public Sector Report: Sustainable Development Goal 16: Focus on Public Institutions, p. 91.

63 Gobierno de Mexico: Hacienda The Ministry of Finance and Public Credit (MoF). Home Page. <https://www.gob.mx/shcp/en>

64 Voluntary National Review for HLPF On Sustainable Development: Basis For A Long-Term Sustainable Development Vision In Mexico 2018. https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/20122VOLUNTARY_NATIONAL_REPORT_060718.pdf

Mexico: Aligning Budgets with the SDGs and SDG 16 for longer-term National Planning, cont.

Take-Aways and Recommendations: Several factors facilitated the budget reform process, including: an existing national budget programme structure with performance targets; standing coordination between planning and budgeting processes; existent monitoring and performance evaluation systems; and political will within the Ministry of Finance to develop methodology linking SDG targets with the budget.

Going forward, it will be important to thoroughly evaluate not just where, but how funds are spent, moving beyond a mapping exercise to analyzing – through monitoring, evaluation and analysis – the effectiveness of public policies and programming in reaching the SDGs. This is true for SDG 16 and indeed for all SDGs. The first step was to align Mexico's budget with the SDGs. The second will be to assess the effectiveness of funds spent to ensure that SDG priorities, including SDG 16 as an enabling SDG, are reached.

**This case study largely pulls from the 2018 World Public Sector Report, with updates provided by Mexico's 2030 Agenda Office within the Office of the President.*

As highlighted in the introduction,

205 VNRs have been presented
by 168 countries 
since 2016

with the number of reporting countries increasing every year or remaining consistent.⁶⁵

Such an increase across regions seems
to highlight countries' commitment 
to the SDGs as well as their interest

in showcasing what has been achieved and lessons learned.⁶⁶ It may also point to the value of the VNR in mobilizing action and partnership towards priority issues, including the implementation of SDG targets or clusters of targets linked to NDPs and other complementary frameworks. To this end, the SDG 16+ framework provides a particularly useful entry point to enabling a fragility-sensitive approach to the VNRs and to accelerating SDG implementation.

65 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF 2020). Secretariat Background Note: Voluntary National Reviews at the 2020 High-level political forum on sustainable development, p. 1.
https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/26384HLPF_2020_Background_note.pdf

66 UN DESA (2019). HLPF 2019 Voluntary National Reviews Synthesis Report, p. 2.

Advancing SDG 16 through Post-VNR Action in Sierra Leone: A Directorate for Access to Justice

Access to Justice and Judicial Reform was central to [Sierra Leone's 2019 VNR](#).⁶⁷ Identified in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report as one of the primary causes for the civil war, the reform of a weak justice sector has since been a priority. For Sierra Leone, the VNR (having presented in 2019 and 2016) entails an integrated, multi-stakeholder process linked to national development planning, with additional links to the [African Union's Agenda 2063](#) and the [New Deal](#).⁶⁸ Its 2019 VNR was specifically tied to the Government of Sierra Leone's Medium-Term National Development Plan (MTNDP) 2019-2023.

Also integrated with the MTNDP and subsequently, the VNR is Sierra Leone's fourth education of the Justice Sector Reform Strategy and Investment Plan. Serving all justice institutions, the Justice Sector Reform Strategy's ultimate aim is to make justice accessible across the country and to ensure that there is an effective communication strategy for justice programmes.

Therefore, and following from the VNR, the Office of the Attorney General and Minister of Justice, as SDG 16 custodian, embarked on establishing a **Directorate on Access to Justice**. The Directorate is designed to connect formal and informal justice mechanisms under one umbrella entity as a means of more effectively and efficiently answering people's justice needs. For example, in the case of land disputes, the Directorate would help those in the provinces know where to take their judicial issues for recourse (formal or informal, such as alternative dispute resolution). To this end, the Directorate will be responsible for coordinating non-state actors, justices for the peace, and informal and customary law processes. In so doing, partnering and working with civil society will be critical.

The Directorate will also work with other justice sector institutions on implementation and monitoring of relevant SDG 16 targets. These include the Law Reform Commission, the Anti-Corruption Commission, the Legal Aid Board, the Human Rights Commission, the Sierra Leone Law School, the Registrar General's Office and the Justice Sector Coordination Office.⁶⁹

Going forward, a justice needs survey is to be disseminated (virtually as much as possible) to better understand different populations' needs before setting up final infrastructure and a user-friendly platform for engagement. This will also be the platform for reporting on SDG 16. Amidst challenges of COVID-19, the Directorate is set to be staffed and fully operational by the end of 2020.

Take-Aways and Recommendations: There should be an SDG 16 sector Working Group that includes civil society, academics and other justice-related institutions, with an effective communication strategy. This would further support the organization and coordination of SDG 16 stakeholders for effective monitoring and reporting. This Working Group should be inclusive of CSOs working to close the gender gap in access to justice.

**This case study is based on interviews with the Justice Sector Coordination Office, Ministry of Justice, Sierra Leone.*

67 Government of Sierra Leone Ministry of Planning and Economic Development (2019). VNR report on SDGs in Sierra Leone. https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/23378Sierra_Leone_VNR_FINAL.pdf

68 African Union (2020). Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want. <https://au.int/en/agenda2063/overview> PBS Dialogue. Home Page. <https://www.pbsdialogue.org/en/>

69 The Justice Sector Coordination Office is working with UNDP to develop a new reporting and monitoring framework for SDG 16. Indicators and targets will be localized, relevant for all institutions required to report on SDG 16, including the police, for example. Data collection, monitoring and evaluation are to be done in partnership with Statistics Sierra Leone, in line with VNR recommendations for a more coordinated approach.

Lesotho: Linking the VNR with National Reform Processes and SDG 16 Implementation

The 2019 VNR in Lesotho coincided with its National Dialogue and Reform Process, an effort to bring about transformation, long-term stability and sustainable peace against a backdrop of decades of political upheaval. **The strategic positioning of the reform process in achieving SDG 16, as captured in the VNR, was such that the VNR became an important additional policy tool in continuing the national dialogue process.** Supported by UNDP, the dialogue process led to national consensus on SDG 16-related reforms across a range of sectors. Key steps related to the VNR and longer-term SDG 16 implementation were as follows:

Step 1: Political commitment and national strategy – Leading up to the VNR and building on the regional intervention of South African Development Community and the Commonwealth, UNDP, with funding from the UN Peacebuilding Fund, galvanized political and social leadership among local and international actors, as well as development partners to formulate the roadmap that guided national dialogue and reforms process.

*Step 2: Establishment of clear leadership, horizontal and vertical coordination mechanism – A National Dialogue Planning Committee coordinated an inclusive and participatory national consultation process. National Leaders Forums and Multi-stakeholder Dialogue Plenaries helped bring consensus on reforms and implementation options. **This content became a statement of policy intent in the VNR.***

*Step 3: Coordinated thought leadership and policy articulation – A UN/Development Partners Technical Advisory Group was established to coordinate thought leadership and technical support by experts. This was predicated on distilling views from consultative dialogues into reform content and implementation options, which were presented to the Leaders Forums and Multi-stakeholder Plenaries. **This content became the policy proposal for SDG 16 embedded in the VNR.***

*Step 4: The National Reforms Authority (the NRA, was created through the NRA Act) – This provides a legal and institutional framework for implementation of the agreed reforms that significantly contributes to attainment of SDG 16. The NRA Act guards against interference and **provides a long-term track for accelerating progress towards SDG 16 by ensuring successful implementation of SDG 16-related reforms.***

The National dialogue highlighted the value of linking the VNR to local realities and national development planning processes. These included: a legislative framework and legal mandate for reform implementation (NRA Act 2019); institutions to oversee implementation; allocation of resources and financing through the budget (Appropriation Bill 2019); and a comprehensive programme of support for coordinated reform implementation across development partners.

Take-aways and Recommendations: For the VNR to be an effective advocacy tool, there must be national consensus on key development issues and underlying challenges, with a well-defined roadmap to address those issues. To this end, VNR recommendations must be linked to national development strategies and policy priorities on follow-up on recommendations

In addition, horizontal, vertical and technical coordination is critical to inclusion, policy coherence and the formulation of policy proposals that become part of a VNR. In terms of data, national repositories of statistics should be supported to generate, process and manage SDG 16-specific data, including through related surveys, with academic and research institutions also engaged in national VNR monitoring and evaluation frameworks.

**This case study draws from insight and input from UNDP Lesotho.*

In taking VNR findings forward for strengthened SDG 16 implementation, a greater focus on capacity-building across actors (including in generating data), in addition to financing and technical expertise, is needed. As highlighted during the

Ulaanbaatar Democracy

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Forum in 2019

“meeting the capacity challenge will be instrumental to meet the ambitious goals of the 2030 Agenda and for the effective implementation of SDG 16+. ⁷⁰ Capacities should not only be built on policy coherence and integration, but also on inclusive and participatory SDG implementation and effective stakeholder engagement.”

Key Resources:

- [Institutional and Coordination Mechanisms – Guidance Note on Facilitating Integration and Coherence for SDG Implementation](#), UNDP (2017);
- [Integrated National Financing Frameworks](#), UNDP (2019);
- [UNDP SDG Financing Sector Hub](#), (2020);
- [World Public Sector Report, SDG 16, Focus on Public Institutions](#), UN DESA (2019)
- [What happens after the VNR? Lessons Learned and Policy Recommendations from the VNR Process](#), Partners for Review (2019);
- [Compendium of National Institutional Arrangements for implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, The 47 countries that presented VNRs at the HLPF in 2019](#), UN DESA (2020);
- [National Mechanisms for Reporting and Follow-up: A Practical Guide to Effective State Engagement with International Human Rights Mechanisms](#), OHCHR (2016);
- [National Mechanisms for Reporting and Follow-up. A Study of State Engagement with International Human Rights Mechanisms](#), OHCHR (2016)
- [The whole of government approach: Initial lessons concerning national coordinating structures for the 2030 Agenda and how review can improve their operation](#), Partners for Review (2019);
- [The Whole of Society Approach: Levels of engagement and meaningful participation of different](#)

[stakeholders in the review process of the 2030 Agenda](#), Partners for Review (2018).

Interviews: Andrea Lara Guevara, Office of the President, Mexico; Gisele Fernandez, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mexico; Shahid Korjie, Ministry of Justice, Sierra Leone; Charles Makunja, UNDP, Lesotho; Giorgi Bobghiashvili, Administration, Georgia; Natia Tsikaradze, Administration, Georgia; Joern Geisselmann, Partners for Review; Anthony Triolo, Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies.

70 UNDP (2019). Final Report: Ulaanbaatar Democracy Forum (UBDF) (2019).

https://www.sdg16hub.org/system/files/2019-03/2019%20UBDF%20rapporteurs%20final%20report_13%20March%202019.pdf