

# 5. ENSURING MEANINGFUL CIVIL SOCIETY ENGAGEMENT AND A ‘LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND’ APPROACH

## What Is It?

Meaningful and systematic civil society inclusion in VNR and post-VNR processes, as linked to national planning, policies and frameworks, is critical to realizing SDG 16 at all levels and the larger 2030 Agenda, and to manifesting a LNOB approach.<sup>137</sup> However, from grassroots to global, civil society organizations are diverse in their missions, mandates and level at which they primarily operate. While different tracks and mechanisms exist by which civil society can engage, inclusion often takes the form of consultation, dialogue and/or partnership (depending on the degree and quality of engagement). This is true for VNR development and validation, as well as monitoring and post-VNR implementation.

In terms of VNR preparation and through consultations, civil society positions may be included in a country’s VNR under specific SDGs listings, as was the case for

Finland’s 2020 VNR

In addition, states can also adopt an ‘open drafting process’ where parts of the official VNR can be delegated to various stakeholders to write without government editing.<sup>138</sup>

Importantly, consultations held in preparation for the VNR, including through national SDG Committees or Working Groups, can also be used as an

entry point for continued engagement

and dialogue following formal VNR presentation.<sup>139</sup> This includes when VNR and human rights reporting processes are connected. Indeed, if civil society or marginalized groups are engaged throughout VNR preparation and follow-up, as well as human rights reporting cycles, accountability towards implementation may be strengthened. Further, and in ensuring meaningful civil society inclusion in post-VNR processes, points of entry through related multistakeholder dialogue processes – such as the

International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (IDPS)

– offer valuable opportunities to both link the VNR to national development planning, sector strategies and implementation and to enhance coordination among government, civil society and other stakeholders.<sup>140</sup>

Civil society engagement can also take the form of ‘Spotlight Reports’ and related follow-up.<sup>141</sup> Spotlight Reports, as generated by civil society and, at times, in partnership with NHRIs, academia and other stakeholders, help to ensure an independent and robust assessment of progress. They can challenge, complement or question member state reports, promote government accountability, provide a global platform for local civil society voices and set the stage for follow-up action,

137 To this end, the [Ulaanbaatar Declaration on Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies](#) calls for strengthening civil society involvement in realizing the SDGs, particularly at the grassroots and local levels.

138 Publications of the Prime Minister’s Office (2020). Voluntary National Review 2020 Finland: Report on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. [http://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/162268/VNK\\_2020\\_8\\_Voluntary\\_National\\_Review\\_Finland.pdf?sequence=4&isAllowed=y](http://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/162268/VNK_2020_8_Voluntary_National_Review_Finland.pdf?sequence=4&isAllowed=y)

139 Civil Society Platform for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (CSPPS) (2019). Reporting for the Future: Final Report Ready for Review 2019. [https://www.cspps.org/files/2020-02/R4R%20Official%20ENG%20FV\\_0.pdf](https://www.cspps.org/files/2020-02/R4R%20Official%20ENG%20FV_0.pdf)

140 International Dialogue on Peacebuilding & Statebuilding IDPS. Home Page. <https://www.pbsbdialogue.org/en/> IDPS is a tripartite forum for political dialogue that brings together countries affected by conflict and fragility, development actors/donors active in the FCV-domain, and civil society (coordinated through the Civil Society Platform for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding).

141 TAP Network 2030. Share your SDG16 “Spotlight” Reports (webpage). <https://tapnetwork2030.org/sdg16reporting/>

often with or alongside government partners.<sup>142</sup> They are particularly important in contexts where civil society would otherwise have little or no opportunity to engage in VNR processes. Spotlight reports can be included as a supplementary addendum to a country's official VNR or can be presented separately through HLPF events and side-events.

According to a

### 2020 study by the TAP Network and GIZ, SDG 16 reporting generally differs between VNRs and Spotlight Reports

<sup>143</sup> While Spotlight Reports provided more in-depth reporting on SDG 16 and its targets, this could be because they often focus specifically on SDG 16 (as opposed to SDG 16 within a cluster of SDGs). VNRs, however, gave more detail on specific mainstreaming efforts, including legislative measures, adopted policies and institutional structures. Strategic approaches to achieving SDG 16 and its interlinkages across the SDGs, was limited in both.

### Why Is It Important?

As highlighted in the

### 2030 Agenda's preamble

the scale and ambition of the agenda are such that they can be achieved only through partners and partnerships, with civil society being key among them.<sup>144</sup> The

### 2019 Rome Civil Society Declaration on SDG 16+

calling for amplified commitments and partnerships for accelerated action, reinforces the importance of this engagement.<sup>145</sup>

Meaningful and diverse civil society participation in VNR and post-VNR processes not only reflects inclusive and effective governance and decision-making, but also helps to ensure that SDG 16-related provisions within a VNR are taken forward. The degree and quality of inclusion in VNR and post-VNR processes matter. They should not be tokenistic, but rather reflective of a true multi-stakeholder process, embedded in human rights. Further, leveraging and empowering civil society and their proximity to local communities and grassroots groups further bolsters government responsiveness to various segments of society, ensuring that a greater diversity of voices is heard in keeping with a LNOB approach.<sup>146</sup>

### LNOB is core to the 2030 Agenda and must be the starting point for all strategies, policies, funding and implementation

While most countries acknowledge LNOB and its importance, few indicate adequate strategies to implement it. As specific to indigenous groups and as highlighted by the

### 2019 Indigenous People's Major Group Statement on SDG 16

"While many of the VNRs acknowledge 'marginalized groups' as those left behind, most States do not provide mechanisms for their meaningful participation. There are also no specific plans, targets and budgets to address the specific condition of indigenous peoples." The need to urgently address this gap has only been heightened by the ongoing pandemic.<sup>147</sup>

142 Numerous resources provide guidance in producing CSO reports, including the [TAP Network](#) and [Action for Sustainable Development](#).

143 Countries selected for this study had to have both a VNR and Spotlight report prepared for the 2019 HLPF. GIZ and TAP Network 2030 (2019). SDG16 in VNRs and Spotlight Reports, p. 14.

[https://tapnetwork2030.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/GIZ\\_TAP\\_2020\\_SDG-16-in-VNRs-and-Spotlight-Reports\\_Final-Version.pdf](https://tapnetwork2030.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/GIZ_TAP_2020_SDG-16-in-VNRs-and-Spotlight-Reports_Final-Version.pdf)

144 United Nations (2015). Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, preamble.

<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld/publication>

145 TAP Network 2030 & Partners (2019). Amplified Commitments and Partnerships for Accelerated Action: Rome Civil Society Declaration on SDG 16+. <https://tapnetwork2030.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Rome-Civil-Society-Declaration-on-SDG16-FINAL.pdf>

146 TAP Network 2030 & Partners (2019). Amplified Commitments and Partnerships for Accelerated Action: Rome Civil Society Declaration on SDG 16+.

147 Indigenous Peoples Major Group for Sustainable Development (2020). Document. APFSD2020: Agenda 3 STATEMENT OF THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLES CONSTITUENCY ON THE SESSION: 'Linking National, Regional, and Global Dimensions of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development'.

## Civil society plays a key role in

### identifying who is left behind



as well as in filling data gaps, providing relevant programming, and advocating for groups not otherwise seen or heard.<sup>148, 149, 150</sup>

Whether in delivering basic services to vulnerable populations, maintaining focus on cohesion and peace in times of crisis, as resources run scarce and misinformation runs rampant, or in tracking government procurement during a pandemic when opportunities for corruption are high, the role of civil society in ensuring a more just, equitable and safe world, through the VNRs and otherwise, is critical.

### How Can This Be Used?

Civil society engagement can take many shapes and forms, including representation in national SDG councils

and committees, CSO-specific platforms, consultations, hearings, workshops, forums and national dialogues, including through online channels and social media-based tools. In addition, civil society can contribute to SDG 16 data collection and monitoring (see chapter 10 for more on data).

One such example was the way in which civil society in Indonesia, Mongolia, Pakistan and South Africa worked with Information Commissions and UNESCO in the preparation of the 2019 VNRs with regards to SDG 16.10.2.

## The Open Government Partnership



is another example where government and civil society work together to create ambitious action plans and use these as a basis to promote strong accountability between member governments and citizens.<sup>151</sup>

## SDGs Kenya Forum: A Lesson in Awareness Raising, Stakeholder Engagement and Strategic Adaptation<sup>152</sup>

*The Government of Kenya recognizes that stakeholders' engagement and public participation are integral elements in developing, designing and implementing policies and development strategies that benefit all Kenyans and have included diverse stakeholders to advocate, implement and report on the sustainable development agenda through the Inter-Agency Technical Working Group (IATWG) on the SDGs. The IATWG comprises all key umbrella institution representatives in the country. CSO engagement and SDGs coordination within IATWG is spearheaded by the Kenya SDGs Forum, which is the co-convenor together with KEPSA and the State Department for Planning's SDGs Coordination Directorate of the Group.*

*As the actor responsible for mobilizing, gathering and organizing all civil society input, the SDGs Kenya Forum is critical to supporting the Government of Kenya's whole-of-society VNR approach. Input provided by the Forum is integrated into the final VNR and separately annexed to ensure that CSO voices are clearly represented. (Kenya first presented in 2017, and has now again in 2020.) In addition to its VNR civil-society-convening role, the SDGs Kenya*

<https://www.indigenouspeoples-sdg.org/index.php/english/all-resources/ipmg-position-papers-and-publications/ipmg-statements-and-interventions>

148 OECD (2018). Development Cooperation Report 2019. Chapter 6: Putting the last first? Civil society's role in leaving no one behind.

<https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/dcr-2018-11-en/index.html?itemId=/content/component/dcr-2018-11-en>

149 According to the [fourth edition \(2019\) of the Canadian Council for International Council's independent VNR assessment](#), data to leave no one behind remains a challenge, particularly as disaggregated by gender, age and disability. In 2019, all countries except one provided information on efforts related to at least one vulnerable group compared to 89 percent in 2018 and 73 percent in 2017. Yet, the extent to which leaving no one behind efforts matched with policy or programmatic changes is unclear.

150 For more on Leaving No One Behind and the VNRs, please see [UN DESA's Community for Development Policy](#).

151 [Open Government Partnership](#)

152 This case study draws from interviews with the SDGs Kenya Forum.

## SDGs Kenya Forum: A Lesson in Awareness Raising, Stakeholder Engagement and Strategic Adaptation, cont.

Forum's also organizes national and multi-stakeholder biennial reports for local consumption, designed to continuously track Kenya's SDG progress. The first of these was produced in 2019 led by the National Treasury and State Planning-SDGs Unit.

Both the VNR and the biennial reports revealed information gaps among civil society organizations as related to SDG 16, despite its relevance to their work. In response, the Forum began to organize CSOs through 'Goal Groups' aligned to SDG targets and indicators. These groups provided a more structured and effective means of engagement for CSOs either working on SDG 16 or interested in so doing.

Under the aegis of the SDGs Forum, ARTICLE 19, as SDG 16 lead, then held three workshops for government, media and civil society working within the scope of SDG 16 targets. This was instrumental in bridging stakeholder gaps, leveraging sector experience and expertise and aligning organizational mandates for better monitoring and accelerating action.

Owing to a diversified stakeholder base, this new SDG 16 Goal Group was able to further strategize on the structure of engagement of state (through the National Steering Committee on Peacebuilding and Conflict Management within the Ministry of Interior) and non-state actors working on SDG 16. This resulted in the formation of four working groups: Violence and Conflict Prevention, Gender-Based Violence and Non-Discrimination, Rights and Freedoms, and Corruption and Illicit Financial Flows.

Notwithstanding the challenges of a new convening strategy amid the COVID-19 pandemic, 2020 VNR civil society engagement saw a significant increase in SDG 16 inputs from more than 17 organizations, with even more engagement during the validation process. This was significantly higher than the 2017 VNR process or the biennial progress report engagement.

**Take-Aways and Recommendations:** VNR recommendations need proper financing and budget allocations. Most fall outside of Kenya's budget and are therefore not acted upon. Others fall outside endorsed laws and thus bottleneck intervention. Reporting guidelines should ask countries to articulate post-VNR processes at country level, including as linked to human rights mechanisms, noting challenges and measures taken to scale best practices, and providing lessons learned for improved implementation.

Yet, there are often issues of trust among governments, civil society, the private sector and the wider public. To this end, it is essential that government and authorities provide meaningful, participatory and open channels for dialogue and engagement on SDG 16+ implementation.

Identifying SDG champions at

**national, subnational and**

**local levels**



is key to building trust and promoting civil society engagement and multi-stakeholder partnerships.<sup>153</sup>

153 Global Alliance (2019). *Enabling the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda Through SDG 16+: Anchoring Peace, Justice and Inclusion*, p. 66. <https://www.sdg16hub.org/content/global-alliance-enabling-implementation-2030-agenda-through-sdg-16-anchoring-peace-justice>

In strengthening civil society engagement in SDG 16 VNR and post-VNR processes,<sup>154</sup>

there are a few specific

approaches and good

practices to highlight

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Where possible, follow-up should be tied to national development plans, action plans, dialogues and/or sector strategies, with a focus on aligning SDG 16-related government programmes and projects with those implemented by civil society. This can help mainstream implementation, consolidate the multi-stakeholder processes often behind such policies and programming, and better measure progress. The below provides a listing of good practices in terms of civil society engagement in both VNR and post-VNR processes.<sup>155</sup>

### **Awareness-Raising, Capacity-Building and Mobilization within Civil Society**

- Engage, organize and mobilize as early as possible, sharing best practices among civil society organizations in engaging with state actors.
- **Build capacity** of civil society to improve and increase participation, from mapping national and local contexts to assessing progress across sectors and identifying civil society comparative advantage in supporting implementation as a diverse sector.<sup>156</sup>

### **Plug into Existing Processes with Government and Other Stakeholders, including NDPs, National Strategies and National Action Plans**

- Use VNR consultations and workshops as a strategic entry point for continuous dialogue and coordination around next steps taken through NDPs, strategies, public policy, programming and budgeting processes.

- Maximize other already open and functioning dialogue channels for VNR follow-up on SDG 16 and related recommendations through coordinated action, policies and strategies.

### **Maintain Communication Lines, Strategize and Publicize**

- Strengthen communication feedback loops and network-building among civil society and others for a coordinated approach. This will help drive alignment with SDG 16 and related targets for strategic impact, while broadening the pool of stakeholders through a network approach.
- Raise awareness of successful initiatives and best practices among government institutions and include local/national donor delegations as stakeholders in the post-VNR process.
- Disseminate the VNR at national and subnational levels, ideally in local/national languages.
- Issue a press release, public statement or hold a press conference about your country's VNR and how to take it forward.
- Ensure transparency over the VNR and how it works, proactively issuing [clear information](#) on timelines, procedures and objectives, as well as information on the officials and institutions involved and where to go with questions.<sup>157</sup> Information should be available in a manner appropriate for local conditions and based on the needs of those discriminated against.
- Hold post-VNR workshops to continue dialogue processes, if possible. (More of post-VNR, public awareness-raising processes and workshops can be found in chapter 8.)

### **Data**

- Focus on addressing data collection and disaggregation, gaps, monitoring and spotlight reporting on SDG 16 (see chapter 10 for more details on data).

<sup>154</sup> Civil Society Platform for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (CSPPS) (2019). Reporting for the Future: Final Report Ready for Review 2019, p. 53.

<sup>155</sup> [Funds should also be made available to facilitate meaningful and equal participation in international forums](#), such as HLPF.

<sup>156</sup> TAP Network 2030, Asia Development Alliance, and FORUS (2020). Empowering Civil Society for National Reporting and Action on SDG16. <https://cspps.org/files/2020-01/Empowering-Civil-Society-for-National-Reporting-and-Action-on-SDG16.pdf>

<sup>157</sup> UN OHCHR (2017). Guidelines on the right to participate in public affairs.

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Pages/DraftGuidelinesRighttoParticipationPublicAffairs.aspx>

## Complementary Dialogue Processes and the Need to Localize: Civil Society in CAR<sup>158</sup>

The Central African Republic (CAR) faced significant challenges in presenting its 2019 VNR. In 2018 and following six years of civil war, the National Peace Recovery and Consolidation Plan (RCPCA), a formal peace agreement, was signed. However, armed rebel groups still controlled about 70 percent of the country, posing immense security challenges. Despite such obstacles, CAR and its partners moved forward with the VNR, aligned with the RCPCA and its NDP, also in anticipation of elections in December 2020.<sup>159</sup>

The **National Coalition of Civil Society Organizations for the New Deal**, (CNOSC) a coalition of 30+ organizations supported by CSPPS, was the main civil society partner involved in CAR's VNR, working closely with the Ministry of Economy, Planning and Cooperation.<sup>160</sup> Adopting an inclusive approach, CNOSC built upon its pre-existing relationship with the government, including as related to its involvement in local and national dialogue processes around the RCPCA, to effectively engage in VNR/post-VNR efforts.

In preparing for the VNR, little ownership of the 2030 Agenda was observed locally. Further, a national gender profile showed women as severely underrepresented in political, economic and administrative decision-making. Despite a law on gender, women make up only 6.5 percent of National Assembly deputies and 17.6 percent of members of government. Inequalities are more pronounced for rural women. As such, the VNR proposed 29 recommendations, including on girls' education, rebalancing the gender parity index as related to the law on parity, and on awareness-raising, ownership and capacity-building.

In response, the CNOSC established a series of supportive actions aimed at recommendations focused on SDG 16 and SDG 5, awareness-raising and ownership of the 2030 Agenda, and building synergy and collaboration around implementation, particularly at the local level. Not exhaustive, these included:

- Documenting the VNR preparation processes (key messages and lessons learned);
- Producing a short film on the process for national television and awareness-raising campaigns;
- Supporting CSO collaboration in post-VNR processes and national development planning;
- An awareness-raising campaign and capacity-building project to improve participation of women as trained candidates in the presidential and legislative elections (December 2020); and
- A sensitization campaign focused on civil society and other stakeholders at the local level to catalyze implementation and action.<sup>161</sup>

**Take-Aways and Recommendations:** Civil society's technical and operational capacities, including in manipulating quantitative tools and methodologies, should be strengthened to promote ownership of achievements and perspectives and increase community engagement. Financial support for CSOs locally is crucial to implementation. Improved statistical data for future reporting should also be considered.

Finally, the collaboration between CNOSC, the Ministry of Economy, Planning and Cooperation and partners maintained through the VNR should continue in support of the peace and development targets in the NDP. Inclusive planning, monitoring and evaluation processes are critical to effective action, particularly in FCAS.

<sup>158</sup> This case study draws on interviews with CNOSC.

<sup>159</sup> In 2018, a National Committee was also established to nationalize 2030 targets and indicators.

<sup>160</sup> Civil Society Platform for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (CSPPS) (2019). Reporting for the Future: Final Report Ready for Review 2019, p. 17.

<sup>161</sup> Much of the above has been stalled due to a lack of funding/redistribution of funding related to COVID-19, social distancing and stay-at-home orders. The pandemic has fueled social divisions, with growing distrust between the population and the government.

In addition to the practices mentioned above, the TAP Network's

## Goal 16 Advocacy Toolkit



(to be updated in late 2020) and its

## SDG Accountability Handbook



provide civil society with specific guidance on how to best engage with governments and other local, regional or international stakeholders on VNR and post-VNR processes and through a Leave No One Behind approach.<sup>162</sup>

## Leaving No One Behind: Meaningful Youth Engagement in the VNRs to Advance SDG 16<sup>163</sup>

## Youth engagement in the 2030 Agenda



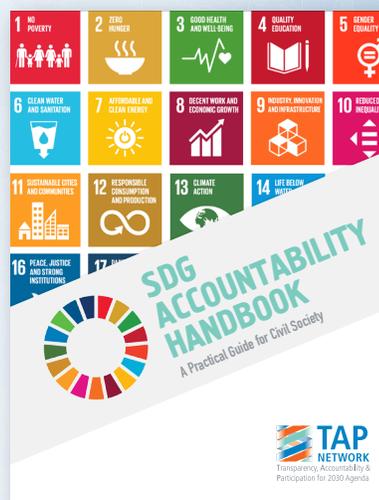
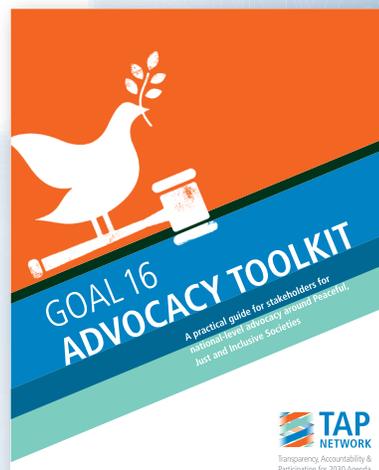
is a democratic, demographic and human rights imperative. It is critical to meeting the ambition of the SDGs and to doing justice to the role of young people as change agents.<sup>164</sup> SDG 16 represents

## a key opportunity



a key opportunity to advance youth empowerment by opening up decision-making processes, guaranteeing fundamental freedoms and ensuring accountability.<sup>165</sup> Yet, meaningful channels of engagement that respect

## young people's diversity



## Systems of exclusion



young people's diversity remain wanting.<sup>166</sup> and

## discrimination



in civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights are some of the barriers youth face.<sup>167</sup>

<sup>162</sup> TAP Network 2030 (2016). Goal 16 Advocacy Toolkit. <https://tapnetwork2030.org/goal-16-advocacy-toolkit/>  
TAP Network 2030 (2019). SDG Accountability Handbook. <https://sdgaccountability.org/>

<sup>163</sup> The UN defines 'youth' as people between 15 and 24 years of age for statistical purposes. However, various definitions of youth are used by UN entities, Member States and organizations and this resource considers these definitions without prejudice. Given definitional complexity, this resource uses 'youth' and 'young people' interchangeably.

<sup>164</sup> Youth 4 Peace. Guiding Principles for Supporting Young People as Critical Agents of Change in the 2030 Agenda (webpage). <https://www.youth4peace.info/GuidingPrinciples/Youth2030>

<sup>165</sup> Youth 4 Peace (2019). Rome Youth Call-to-Action: Promoting and Supporting Youth Inclusive and Youth-Led SDG16 Implementation, Monitoring and Accountability. <https://www.youth4peace.info/system/files/2019-06/Rome%20Youth%20Call%20to%20action%20-%20designed%20version.pdf>

<sup>166</sup> Youth 4 Peace and UN Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development (2019). Guiding Principles For Supporting Young People as Critical Agents of Change in the 2030 Agenda. <https://www.youth4peace.info/system/files/2017-11/2017.07.26%20-%20Guiding%20Principles%20-%20Youth%20Engagement%20in%202030%20Agenda%20Implementation%20-%20IANYD%20Final.pdf>

<sup>167</sup> Youth, Peace & Security and UNFPA (2018). The Missing Peace. <https://www.youth4peace.info/system/files/2018-10/youth-web-english.pdf>  
UN OHCHR (2018). Youth and Human Rights Report of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/1640929?ln=en>

# YOUTH2030

WORKING WITH AND FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

VNRs could help transcend such barriers by promoting youth participation in national and local planning, budgeting and decision-making processes, and in HLPF delegations.<sup>168</sup> Far from exhaustive, a brief listing of formal spaces and means of engagement is below.

Governments and partners should engage national youth structures, pacts and charters to ensure that young people are supported as stakeholders in VNR design, implementation and accountability processes.

## National Youth Councils (NYCs)

if perceived as legitimate and representative, can strengthen youth participation and connect young people with decision makers.<sup>169</sup> To this end,

## four 2019 VNR countries highlighted discussions with NYCs

four 2019 VNR countries highlighted discussions with NYCs as part of their inclusive approach to the VNR.<sup>170</sup> Engagement could also link to national youth policies, NDPs and related frameworks.

Accountability to young people and their coalitions in highlighting the impact of their input is important in ensuring their engagement in VNR processes.<sup>171</sup> In preparing for the VNR, youth may be consulted through national SDG consultations and workshops. For example, and under the theme of Leave No One Behind,

## a national youth SDGs consultation

was held in Tanzania in 2019, focusing on youth's participation in SDG implementation, including with an emphasis on SDG 16.<sup>172</sup> Inputs were featured in Tanzania's 2019 VNR and in a CSO spotlight report.

## Strengthening youth-led regional platforms, such as the African Youth SDGs Summit

present an opportunity to capture and support the work of young people in advancing the SDGs and their role in VNR processes.<sup>173</sup> Similarly, the European Youth Forum started mapping SDG-related activities of NYCs to create an overview of how youth organizations are engaging in 2030 implementation.

Data partnerships between national statistical systems, youth organizations, civil society, LRGs, international organizations and others provide another channel.<sup>174</sup>

## Many SDG 16 indicators lack age-disaggregated data

168 Specific recommendations from young people for more inclusive, national follow-up, review and accountability processes with sufficient time for engagement can be found in the 2020 *Believe in Better* report by ActionAid.

169 The Danish Youth Council (2019). Meaningful youth participation towards 2030 and beyond. [https://en.duf.dk/fileadmin/user\\_upload/Editor/documents/DUF\\_materialer/DUF\\_Publikationer/DUF\\_2019\\_Meaningful\\_Youth\\_Participation\\_Towards\\_2030\\_and\\_Beyond.pdf](https://en.duf.dk/fileadmin/user_upload/Editor/documents/DUF_materialer/DUF_Publikationer/DUF_2019_Meaningful_Youth_Participation_Towards_2030_and_Beyond.pdf)

170 Kindornay, S. and Gendron, R. (2020). *Progressing National SDG Implementation: An independent assessment of the voluntary national review reports submitted to the UN HLPF in 2019*. Ottawa: Canadian council for International Cooperation. <https://ccic.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/01-Highlights-ENG.pdf>

For more on youth engagement in VNRs, through National Youth Councils and including as related to the UN Youth Delegate Programme, please see the Annex.

171 ActionAid's 2020 Believe in Better report, and based on examples from Bangladesh, Zimbabwe and Zambia.

172 Tanzania, M. (2019). *Leave NO youth behind: The National SDGs Youth consultation workshop to inform the Voluntary National Review (VNR) of the United Republic of Tanzania*. <https://medium.com/@mulikatanzania/leave-no-youth-behind-the-national-sdgs-youth-consultation-workshop-to-inform-the-voluntary-720193524d3d>

173 African Youth SDGs Summit (webpage). <https://youthsdgssummit.org/>

174 UNDP Global Alliance (2019). *Global Alliance Report Shares Three Key Findings on SDG16+*. SDG Knowledge Hub by IISD. <https://sdg.iisd.org/news/global-alliance-report-shares-three-key-findings-on-sdg-16/>

which risks not disclosing information on the 1.85 billion young people globally, one out of four of whom is affected by violence or armed conflict.<sup>175</sup> To this end, youth-driven data collection and perception-based studies should be recognized and incorporated into VNRs, as well as

### youth-inclusive governance indicators

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covering, in particular, 16.6, 16.7 and 16.10.<sup>176</sup>

Youth organizations, movements, networks and initiatives should be provided with adequate and predictable financial resources to advance their work as related to VNR engagement and SDG 16.

For more on youth-sensitive VNRs, please see

### Youth-Sensitive VNRs

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For more on how young people can get involved in their country's VNR, see

### You Involvement in your country's VNR

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### Key Resources/Civil Society:

- [SDG Accountability Handbook](#), TAP Network (2019);
- [The Whole of Society Approach](#), Partners for Review (2018);
- [SDGs in VNRs and Spotlight Reports](#), TAP and GIZ (2019);
- [Reporting for the Future: Final Report Ready for Review](#), Civil Society Platform for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (2019);
- [Empowering Civil Society for National Action and Reporting on SDG 16](#), TAP Network, Forus and Asia Development Alliance and other civil society partners (2019);
- [The Development Cooperation Report – Joining Forces to Leave No One Behind](#), OECD (2018).

**Interviews:** Peter van Sluijs, CSPPS; Florence Syveuo, Kenya SDGs Forum; Eloi Kouzoundji, CNOSC, CAR; Martin Tskounkeu, ADIN, Cameroon.

### Key Resources/Youth:

- [Rome Youth Call to Action](#), UNDP 16X16 Initiative (2019);
- [Guiding Principles for Supporting Young People as Critical Agents of Change in the 2030 Agenda](#), Restless Development, UNDP and the UN Inter-agency Network on Youth Development (2017);
- [Believe in Better](#), ActionAid (2020);
- [Youth Power: Powering the Voluntary National Reviews](#), Restless Development (2018);
- [The Missing Peace: Independent Progress Study on Youth, Peace and Security](#), Graeme Simpson (Independent Lead Author), PBO and UNFPA (2018);
- [Youth and Human Rights: report of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights](#), (2018).

**Interview:** Maria Stage, UNDP.

<sup>175</sup> Global Alliance (2019). *Enabling the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda Through SDG 16+: Anchoring Peace, Justice and Inclusion*, p. 55.

<sup>176</sup> UNDP (2016). Critical agents of change in the 2030 Agenda.

<https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/democratic-governance/critical-agents-of-change-in-the-2030-agenda.html>