



# **VNRs with data from a Major Groups and other Stakeholders' perspective**

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December 11, 2019



## **Background - Where is the requirement to report along data coming from?**

- 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
- Global Indicator Framework
- Secretary General's Voluntary National Review Guidelines

# 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

In paragraph 74 of the 2030 Agenda, Member States identified **a number of principles** to guide the follow-up and review process at all levels:

- a. (a) As national ownership is key to achieving sustainable development, the outcome from national level processes will be the foundation for reviews at regional and global levels, given that **the global review will be primarily based on national official data sources.**
- b. (g) They will be rigorous and based on **evidence**, informed by country-led evaluations and **data which is high-quality, accessible, timely, reliable and disaggregated by income, sex, age, race, ethnicity, migration status, disability and geographic location and other characteristics relevant** in national contexts.

## SG VNR Guidelines

- First issued in 2015 and reviewed every two years, last in 2019
- Last review **incorporates lessons learnt from 4 years of HLPF**
- New up-dated guidelines references the need / use of data **17 times** 😊 (7 pages long document)
- **Introduction section:** VNRs are most meaningful when they are **evidence-based**, ...
- **Structure** of the VNR: countries are requested to elaborate on **data gathering and analysis** challenges...
- Countries are encouraged – **even in cases of incomplete data** – to provide, as far as possible, an analysis of the causes of their **SDG implementation** challenges and possible ways forward...

## SG VNR Guidelines

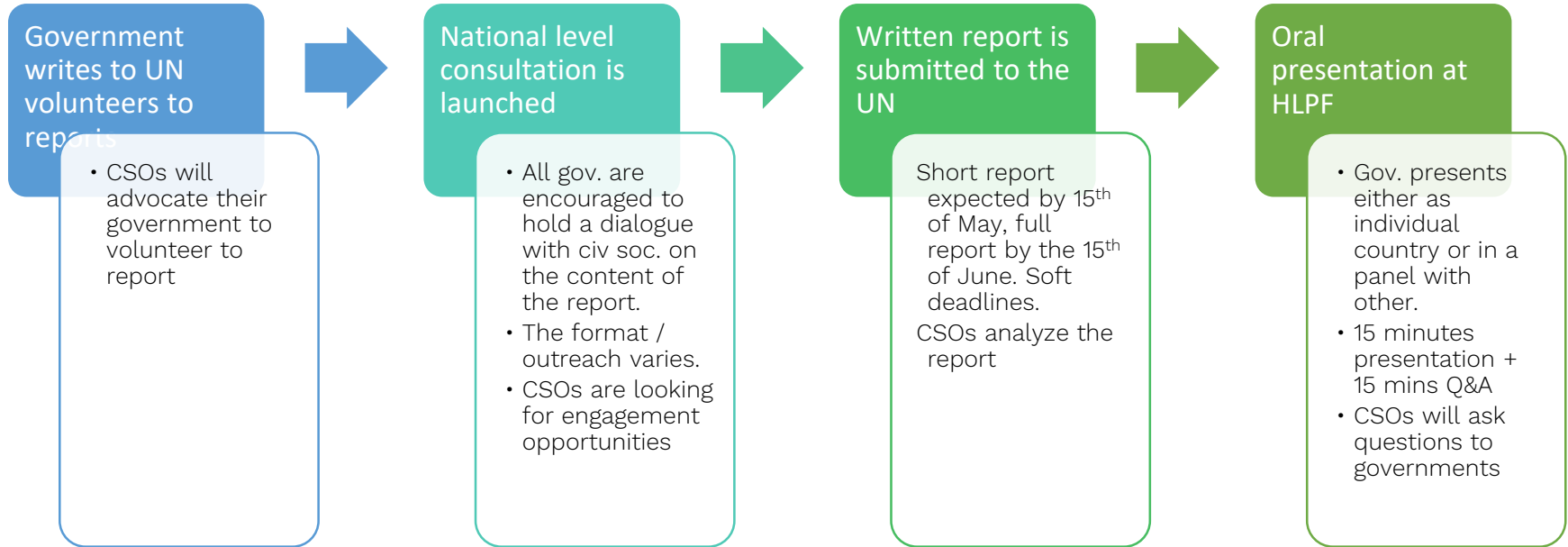
- **LNOB**: In this regard, the review could detail how the people who are the furthest behind and vulnerable groups have been **identified, including through improved data collection and disaggregation, ....**
- **Institutional arrangements**: It could highlight what has been done to ensure that **relevant data**, information and analysis is systematically gathered, shared, analyzed and used across sectors and how this has helped with implementation of the SDGs
- Countries are encouraged to provide brief information **on progress and the status of all Sustainable Development Goals**. It would be desirable to describe critical difficulties encountered in reaching them and how they could be addressed, **referring to data provided in a statistical annex**.
- The review could indicate how financial systems, **statistical data and resource allocations are being aligned to support the realization of the 2030 Agenda** and its pledge to leave no one behind.
- **Annexes** Countries are encouraged to include an **annex with data**, Presentation at HLPF: Use focused **infographics, data visualization ...**

## Why to report along data?

- To support the narrative with facts = establish credibility over the long term.
- Establish legitimacy.
- To establish a baseline and to be able to measure progress
- To provide practical solutions to problems by understanding what data tells us.
- Build a convincing case and present clear policy options. Package new ideas in familiar theory or narratives. Communicate effectively.

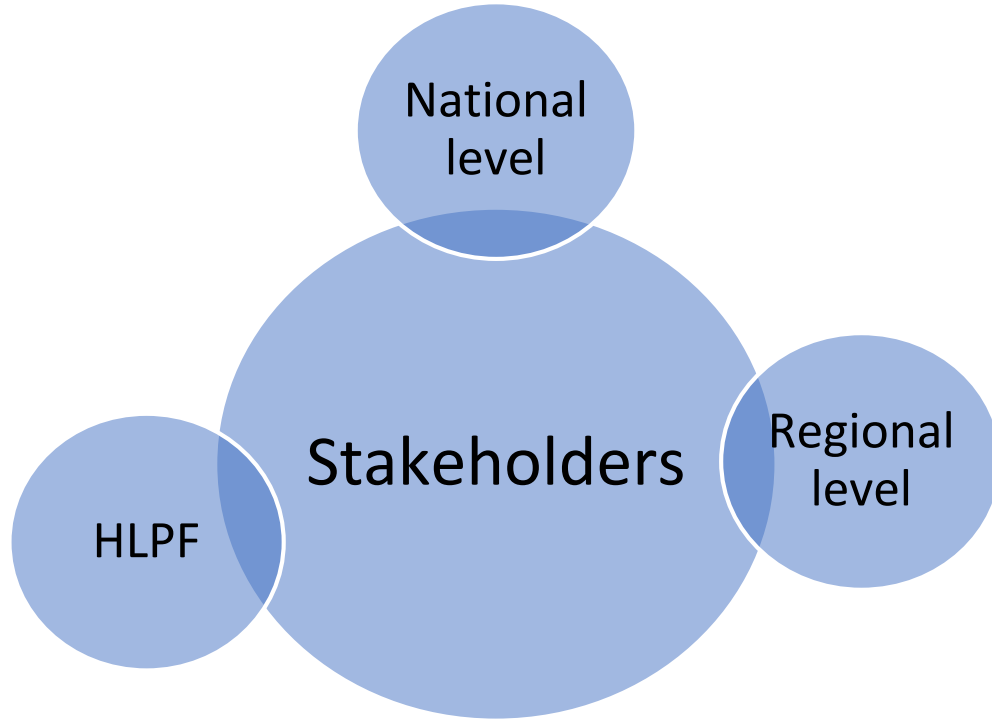
Despite all recommendations only 53%  
of VNRs contained a statistical annex

# CSO engagement in the VNR process





# Cycle of advocacy



# THE LADDER OF PARTICIPATION



# **What is missing from the national consultations?**

Data dialogue!

## Data and CSOs

- We want to see data, talk data and hear about data!
- All types of data are welcomed. Official and non-official data, incomplete data.
- Key to structure the dialogue around data, use data to identify gaps and challenges and to influence policies, evidence based decisions.
- CSOs are also stepping up to design and define evidence based advocacy.

## What is evidence-based advocacy?

- For a very long time CSOs often collected data ONLY to largely comply with donor requirements, and there was not necessarily meaningful use of the information collected!

### Data is powerful!

- Data allows for situation analysis and reflection on data can contribute to design, adaptation of programs and projects. Also allows for evaluation and monitoring of progress and outcomes.
- Messages and activities designed to influence individuals and impact decision-making must be based on evidence. This is **both to protect the integrity of advocates and to ensure that the change sought is based on an understanding of the reality of the situation and what works.**
- The Data Driven Advocacy approach recognizes the powerful and unique role that official data plays in providing system-level, standardized information about any issue, and in tracking the real impact of national and subnational policy measures

## Data-driven advocacy

- Data-driven advocacy is rooted in the understanding that **decision-makers will be influenced by compelling messages based on rigorous data and evidence**. This means that influencing approaches and tactics draw on and seek to help stakeholders understand and act on robust, policy-relevant, and timely data and evidence.
- Data driven advocacy complements common advocacy approaches used by advocates, demonstrating how the utilization and integration of data and evidence into common tactics and tools can strengthen impact.

## Why data-driven advocacy?

- Data and evidence can be a powerful tool that advocates have **to change minds, build consensus** and **influence policy decisions**.
- Data and evidence can **enhance credibility**. Advocates can take data and build an evidence base that will allow them to advance their cause both by demonstrating the **scale of the challenge** and by showing how possible solutions could or have worked.
- Decision-making processes are subject to political motives and ideological persuasions, particularly in political contexts that suffer from weak institutions. Data and evidence enable advocates **to challenge subjective values or beliefs** with concrete facts and evidence to **foster informed public debate**.
- This means that, when used effectively, data and evidence can influence the design of stronger, more impactful policies and programs.
- Advocates can also help to encourage a **data-driven policy environment**. To promote the supply and demand of official data and the use of data by decision-makers.

## CSOs understand data constraints BUT...

- It is important to be aware of the significant barriers that exist in the production of official statistics. It can take **several years to plan a survey**, and several years to **collect, process and disseminate the results**.
- Sometimes **the lack of resources** can mean that household surveys miss out on certain population groups.

BUT...



## But... CSOs also have data

- **Big Data** is an umbrella term referring to the large amounts of digital data continually generated by the global population.
- Citizens generated data
- The concept of **data revolution**--the opportunity to improve the data that is essential for decision-making, accountability, and solving development challenges- is considered as a central tenet of the Sustainable Development Goals' framework.
- **Research data** can be indicative and identify trends and challenges.

**KEY is to align data dialogues and use all possible avenues for the benefit of SDGs implementation!**

## Turning back to VNR reports and alternate reports compiled by CSOs

- Since 2016 data has been always a central part of VNR engagement of CSOs – we always ask questions about availability of data and disaggregation of data at HLPF!!!
- It has become a key advocacy ask for the next HLPF review to happen 2020!
- CSOs will always challenges governments on the available data, their data capacity etc...
- CSOs will also do their own reports although they are DISCOURAGED at global level! These reports will always have reflection on data!
- In 2019 CSOs submitted 68 parallel reports that have been compiled at the national / sub-national and grassroots level CSOs.

# Pros and cons of VNRs

## Pros:

- Voluntary National Reviews are positive and have a galvanizing effect (SDG implementation, collaboration and engagement with civil society)
- Governments are now producing higher quality reports, which are better-informed by data, address the full set of SDGs

## Cons:

- VNRs mostly report achievements
- There are few concrete examples on how to leave no one behind
- The VNR presentations are not very interactive
- The role of civil society can be strengthened
- There is a lack of concrete follow-up processes at the national and regional levels

# MGoS contributions to VNRs

- Data consultations should be held during the national consultations towards VNRs.
- Align the data revolution dialogue with the global indicator framework. Have official and non-official data complementing each other and presented in the VNR reports.
- Forge data partnerships at national level - NSOs can advise and support CSOs to collect data with the proper methodology!
- Work together, to complement with non-traditional data sources to address data gaps and data collection challenges to support an evidence-based VNR

## Recommendations to strengthen VNRs with data

- VNRs should pay more attention to interlinkages between the Goals and concrete actions to ensure no one is left behind.
- VNRs should use data and be evidence-based, while also acknowledging data gaps that often reflect structural discrimination.
- VNR oral presentations also should be supported by data and be evidence-based.
- Citizen-generated data need to be taken into account with the provision of proper guidance to enhance and complement national institutional efforts and also are recognized as official data.

## Recommendations to strengthen VNRs with data

- Partnerships, including with civil society, academia and other stakeholders, should be encouraged to strengthen national statistical capacity for evidence-based VNRs.
- When using technology to improve data collection, analysis and accessibility be sure it is accessible to all and is not harmful.
- Strengthen coordination between different stakeholders to coordinate inputs and collect data from multiple sources, including citizen-gathered data to fill gaps.

## Recommendations to strengthen VNRs with data

- Official mechanisms should be established at the national level to ensure stakeholder engagement, including the effective inclusion of marginalized groups that can share key data that are missing in the implementation of the SDGs and in reporting.
- Shadow/ spotlight/ alternate reports that include citizen-gathered data should be considered and published at all levels, placing particular emphasis on incorporating lessons learned, outputs and gaps of regional and global fora.
- These reports should also be published and made available on the UN website.

**Thank you!**

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