

**Side Event of the 53<sup>rd</sup> session of the UN Statistical Commission:  
*Preparing evidence-based Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs): best practices and experiences***

**Monday, 31 January 2022 | 8:00-9:30 am NYC EST (virtual)**

**Concept Note**

One of the critical follow-up and review mechanisms for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is the Voluntary National Review (VNR) prepared by Member States and presented at the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF). These VNRs, prepared through a country-led process, facilitate the sharing of experiences—both successes and challenges—among Member States, with a view toward accelerating implementation of the 2030 Agenda. To date, 176 VNRs have been presented at the HLPF since 2016. Of those, 42 presented in 2021 and another 46 countries are planning to present in 2022.

Data and statistics are the backbone of any meaningful and evidence-based review of the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). However, the COVID-19 crisis is causing serious disruptions to critical statistical operations across the entire world. The recent rounds of VNRs have highlighted responses to the COVID-19 crisis in terms of data collection and the implementation of the SDGs, as well as challenges, best practices and lessons learned (especially from those presenting the VNR a second or third time) on how data and statistics can support a data-driven and evidence-based VNR process.

It remains true for many countries that the challenges of limited data availability and the lack of timely data or level of disaggregation limit full review of SDG implementation. Countries also continue to stress that financial and technical support for monitoring the SDGs and capacity building is greatly needed. However, measures have been taken to strengthen national statistical capacity, including the use of new technologies to improve data collection, analysis and accessibility; partnerships and other types of support to strengthen national efforts to achieve the SDGs; and the use of non-traditional data sources to keep SDGs on the right track.

This side event aims to highlight country experiences, best practices and challenges in developing evidence-based VNRs focusing on the following topics: integrating non-traditional data sources and data innovations with official statistics and building partnerships with different data stakeholders; data gap analysis, platforms and visualization; and data disaggregation and leaving no one behind.

**Objectives**

- Sharing experiences, best practices and challenges in developing an evidence-based VNR.
- Discussing lessons learned and providing advice for countries planning a VNR or other evidence-based SDG monitoring report.
- Exploring best tools, data sources and other methodologies/techniques for SDG monitoring.

**Registration:** [https://bit.ly/UNSC53\\_side\\_event\\_VNR](https://bit.ly/UNSC53_side_event_VNR) (Open until Thursday, 27 January)

## Agenda

1. **Welcome and introduction to the side event**, Ms. Yongyi Min, Chief, SDG Monitoring Section, UN Statistics Division *[5 min.]*
2. **Country experiences:** *[10 min. each followed by short Q&A]*
  - a. **Somalia (VNR presentation in 2022):** Mr. Sharmarke Farah, Director General, Somalia National Bureau of Statistics and Ms. Alexandra Silfverstolpe, consultant, UNDP
  - b. **Switzerland (VNR presentation in 2022, 2018, 2016):** Mr. Jacques Ducrest, Delegate of the Federal Council for the 2030 Agenda
  - c. **Colombia (VNR presentation in 2021):** Ms. Karen Chavez, Head of SDG Indicators Unit/Advisor, National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE)
  - d. **UK (VNR presentation in 2019):** Ms. Joanne Evans, Head of International Collaboration for Health Analysis and Pandemic Insights, UK ONS and Ms. Silvia Manclossi, Assistant Deputy Director, UK ONS
3. **Open discussion** *[25-30 min.]*

### Discussion Questions/Topics

#### *Possible questions to panelists*

- What are the main challenges faced with data collection and management for the preparation of the VNR?
- How have you addressed data gaps in the VNR process? If applicable, how has the monitoring process improved since past VNR processes and can you share your good experiences?
- What new data sources or data innovations have been used for SDG monitoring and included in the VNR, particularly in light of COVID-19? Can you share your country experiences?
- Can any country share their experience on data sources, techniques or best practices that have been most helpful for collecting disaggregated data for different vulnerable populations?
- In what ways will the information in the VNR and on SDG implementation be promoted or disseminated to the public in your country (i.e. dashboard, video, website, etc.)?