

“Open, inclusive, participatory and transparent”: How can voluntary national reviews support the pledge to “leave no one behind” in implementing the 2030 Agenda?

1. Background

The High-level Political Forum (HLPF) plays a key role in facilitating the sharing of experiences, including successes, challenges and lessons learned, particularly through Voluntary National Reviews (VNR).

In the 2030 Agenda, all Member States committed to a robust, voluntary, effective, participatory, transparent and integrated follow-up and review framework that will help countries to maximise and track progress in implementing the 2030 Agenda in order to ensure that no one is left behind. This commitment is also central to ensuring HLPF 2017’s theme of ‘eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world’ is achieved.

A key principle of these follow-up and review processes at all levels, committed to by all countries, is that these processes will be ‘open, inclusive, participatory and transparent for all people’ (paragraph 74d), and they will ‘have a particular focus on the poorest, most vulnerable and those furthest behind’ (paragraph 74e).

We (Sightsavers, Together 2030, Leonard Cheshire Disability, Save Matabeleland, Centro de Pensamiento Estratégico Internacional (Cepei), Justice, Development and Peace Commission (JDPC Ijebu-Ode), Philippine Social Enterprise Network, World Vision, Leading Women of Africa, PACIFICWIN-Youth, CAFOD, Newcastle University and Poverty Reduction Forum Trust (PRFT), together with representatives from Member States including: Sierra Leone, Sweden, Colombia, Bangladesh and India (All TBC) wish to hold a side event that focuses on how past and present volunteer countries are delivering on the commitments and recommendations outlined in their voluntary national reviews and how Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and stakeholders are collaborating in this process.

The side-event will focus on discussing how (and if) VNRs are creating a cycle of accountability to citizens (especially people from marginalised groups) at the national level, bringing governments and civil society partners from countries that volunteered in 2016 to present their post-HLPF experience as well as 2017 VNR countries to share their national processes and planned next steps after the HLPF.

2. Side-event objective

This side event will seek to gather the participation of Member States, civil society, academia and other stakeholders to reflect experiences, challenges and opportunities of implementing 2030 Agenda at the national level and how VNRs are contributing (or not) to the national accountability cycle.

It will focus on:

- Inviting governments that have volunteered for VNRs in 2016 and 2017 to comment on how they are keeping or plan to keep up the momentum of delivery and implementation within all sectors after the HLPF sessions.
- Inviting civil society partners and parliamentarians to comment on how they are engaging in implementation and organising after the VNR, as integral partners of the national accountability cycle and following up structures (paragraph 47).

3. Member State co-sponsors

- Sierra Leone (TBC)
- Sweden (TBC)
- Colombia (TBC)
- Bangladesh (TBC)
- India (TBC)

4. Civil Society partners

- Sightsavers (Global)
- Together 2030 (Global)
- Leonard Cheshire Disability (Global)
- Save Matabeleland (Zimbabwe)
- Centro de Pensamiento Estratégico Internacional- CEPEI (Colombia)
- Justice, Development and Peace Commission – JDPC Ijebu-Ode (Nigeria)
- Philippine Social Enterprise Network (Philippines)
- World Vision (Global)
- Leading Women of Africa (Cameroun)
- PACIFICWIN-Youth (New Zealand)
- Catholic Agency For Overseas Development, CAFOD (Global)
- Newcastle University (UK)
- Poverty Reduction Forum Trust, PRFT (Zimbabwe)

5. Side-event format

A panel discussion followed by short question and answer session, including:

- **Welcome remarks from Moderator**
- **Introductions by co-sponsor country representatives:**
 - Sierra Leone (TBC)
 - Sweden (TBC)
 - Colombia (TBC)
 - Bangladesh (TBC)
 - India (TBC)
- **Presentations from civil society partners/parliamentarians:**
 - Sierra Leone parliamentarian (Chair of Parliamentary Action Group on SDGs)
 - Anuradha Pareek (DPO leader, Bikaner, Rajasthan and CSO Forum Asia-Pacific Forum for Sustainable Development participant), India
 - Leonard Cheshire representative – Outcomes of their research
 - Judith Kaulem (Executive Director, Poverty Reduction Forum Trust, PRFT), Zimbabwe
- **Discussants:** A few discussants from different sectors will be invited to comment on the presentations and flag challenges and opportunities identified. *Names to be defined later in order to guarantee space for interaction.*
 - Dessima Williams, Special Adviser for Implementation of the SDGs, PGA's Office (TBC)
 - Juwang Zhu (UNDESA/DSD) or UNDP representative (TBC)
 - Newcastle University
 - Together 2030 - Discussion based on the perceptions survey report
 - Others to be identified - Regional and sector balance