

North and Central Asia Workshop on Preparation of Voluntary National Reviews

An Associated Event of the Sixth North and Central Asia Multistakeholder Forum on Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals

Hybrid Meeting Format, Almaty, 5 October 2022

CONCEPT NOTE

Context

The voluntary national review (VNR) is a process through which countries assess and present national progress made in implementing the 2030 Agenda. As part of its follow-up and review mechanisms, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development encourages member states to "conduct regular and inclusive reviews of progress at the national and sub-national levels, which are country-led and country-driven". These national reviews are expected to serve as a basis for the regular reviews by the high-level political forum (HLPF) meeting under the auspices of ECOSOC. The VNR aims to facilitate the sharing of experiences, including successes, challenges and lessons learned, with a view to accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The VNR also seek to strengthen policies and institutions of governments and to mobilize multistakeholder support and partnerships for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

All countries in North and Central Asia have completed and reported at least one VNR. Kazakhstan reported their second VNR in 2022, whereas Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan are preparing their second VNR to be reported in 2023. While reporting on the specific context of each country, the VNR also outline challenges, many of which are similar across countries. The VNRs are not only a reporting mechanism to periodically take stock, but also a tool for countries to continuously reflect and improve on the SDG implementation process itself. In this regard, this Workshop will facilitate the exchange of good practices in preparing VNR and present ESCAP's support to countries which are undergoing the VNR process, such as the VNR Twinning Programme. At the end of the workshop, there will be an informal VNR clinic for 2023 VNR countries. This will provide an opportunity to countries to ask questions and for ESCAP to provide information about the VNR process. It will also allow space for VNR Twinning Countries to share approaches and ideas.



Objectives

The workshop will be held in the format of roundtable discussions and aims to provide stakeholders with a platform to:

- discuss how VNR can help strengthen reforms and accelerated progress of the SDGs;
- share experiences and good practices in stakeholder engagement for VNR preparations;
- explore innovative ideas and modalities to further strengthen “next generation” VNRs.

Participants

The workshop will gather relevant stakeholders from the government, and experts from academia, civil society, parliaments, private sector, think tanks, international organizations, etc. involved in the preparation of VNRs in North and Central Asian countries. Participation will be by invitation only.

Programme Overview

Wednesday, 5 October 2022

* All times are stated in Almaty time (GMT+6).

| Time | Session |
|---------------|---|
| 09:00 – 09:15 | Welcome Remarks <i>Mr. Nikolay Pomoshchnikov, Head, Subregional Office for North and Central Asia, UN ESCAP</i> |
| 09:15 – 09:20 | Setting the Scene: How VNRs can accelerate achievement of the 2030 Agenda at the national level <i>Ms. Caitlin Porter, Senior VNR Advisor, UN ESCAP</i> |
| 09:20 – 10:20 | <u>Roundtable 1: The Impact of Voluntary National Reviews</u> <i>This roundtable will discuss countries' experiences in preparing the VNR and how the VNR preparation process can help to strengthen institutional mechanisms for monitoring the progress of sustainable development.</i> <i>Moderator: Ms. Michiko Enomoto, Deputy Head, SONCA, ESCAP</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Uzbekistan: Mr. Umidjon Khudoynazarov, Head of the SDG department/Mr Ulugbek Karimov, Third Secretary, Economic Diplomacy Directorate, Ministry of Foreign Affairs• Kyrgyzstan: Ms Aisulu Amanova, Head of Strategic Development Department, Ministry of Economy and Commerce• Georgia: Mr Giorgi Kobelashvili, Second Secretary, Department of International Economic Relations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs |
| 10:20 – 10:45 | Coffee Break |

| Time | Session |
|---------------|---|
| 10:45 – 11:45 | <p><u>Roundtable 2: Stakeholder engagement in preparing Voluntary National Reviews</u></p> <p><i>This roundtable will feature different stakeholder groups to discuss the different forms of partnerships in the VNR preparation process. These partnerships include engagement with youth, private sector, civil society, parliament, etc.</i></p> <p><i>Moderator:</i> Mr. Rinad Temirbekov, Director, Eurasia Foundation</p> <p>Featuring experiences in different countries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kazakhstan: Ms. Bakytgul Khambar, Director of the Centre for Strategic Research and Sustainable Development, Economic Research Institute • Azerbaijan: Mr. Orman Abdinov, Chief advisor at the Sustainable Development and Social Policy Department at the Ministry of Economy of Azerbaijan Republic (3-5 Minutes) • Uzbekistan: Mr. Umidjon Khudoynazarov, Head of the SDG department/Mr Ulugbek Karimov, Third Secretary, Economic Diplomacy Directorate, Ministry of Foreign Affairs – tbc |
| 11:45 – 11:50 | Break |
| 11:50 – 12:50 | <p><u>Roundtable 3: Ideas and reflections for preparation of VNR in 2023</u></p> <p><i>This roundtable will invite countries reporting their VNR in 2023 to reflect upon the discussions in the first two roundtables and provide some information on how they are approaching their VNR process.</i></p> <p><i>Moderator: Caitlin Porter, Senior VNR Advisor, ESCAP</i></p> <p>Featuring experiences in different countries conducting their VNR in 2023:</p> <p>Tajikistan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Farrukh Faizullozoda Voris, Head of Department of Regional Development and monitoring the implementation of national programs, Ministry of Economic Development and Trade. <p>Turkmenistan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms Elita Shumskaya - Chief Specialist of the Department for Strategic and Sustainable Development of the Ministry of Finance and Economy of Turkmenistan <p>Uzbekistan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uzbekistan: Mr. Umidjon Khudoynazarov, Head of the SDG department/Mr Ulugbek Karimov, Third Secretary, Economic Diplomacy Directorate, Ministry of Foreign Affairs |
| 12:50 – 13:00 | Closing Remarks |
| 13:00 – 14:00 | Lunch |

| Time | Session |
|-------------|--|
| 14.00-17.00 | <p><u>VNR Clinic for 2023 Voluntary National Review countries only (OPTIONAL)</u> <i>Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan</i></p> <p>The VNR Clinic aims to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer an informal space for 2023 VNR Countries to provide an update on their 2nd VNR preparations and ask questions • Foster capacity building and peer learning by providing advice on VNR planning and key challenges encountered in the 2nd VNR process • Share information on ESCAP support available for VNR formulation, including different data analysis tools and analysis and provide space to ask questions • To connect countries that are part of the ESCAP Twinning Programme for the first time and establish their objectives and next steps for the twinning initiative. |
| 14:00-14:45 | <p><u>Information and sharing on the VNR process</u></p> <p><i>Overview of VNR timeline and phases of VNR process</i> <i>Ms. Caitlin Porter, Senior VNR Advisor, UN ESCAP</i></p> <p><i>Status of VNR preparations</i> <i>VNR countries can provide informal updates on their VNR preparations and share their plans for the VNR process</i> <i>Opportunity for countries to ask informal questions to ESCAP or each other</i></p> |
| 14.45-15.45 | <p><u>ESCAP Support available for data and analysis</u></p> <p><i>SDG Progress Assessments – how they can strengthen your VNR</i> <i>Ms. Patricia Wong, Statistics Division, ESCAP</i> <i>Mr. Zarif Jumaev, UN Resident Coordinator's Officer, Uzbekistan</i></p> <p><i>ESCAP analysis and support</i> <i>Overview of ESCAP analysis available to support VNR formulation</i></p> <p><i>Question and answer session</i></p> |
| 15.45-16.45 | <p><u>Twinning partnerships</u> <i>ESCAP will provide an overview of the twinning programme and timeline.</i> <i>Countries that are part of the twinning programme can meet and connect and discuss key twinning activities</i></p> <p>Representative from government of Mongolia (TBC) to attend VNR clinic remotely and provide an update on their VNR process and interests in the twinning programme.</p> |
| 17:00 | <p>Closure of VNR clinic.</p> |

Further Information

The Workshop and VNR Clinic will take place on 5 October 2022 in Almaty, Kazakhstan and online. It will be conducted in English and Russian with simultaneous interpretation. Detailed information can be found on the official event page [HERE](#).

Invited participants are required to register [HERE](#) to participate in the Workshop.

All questions regarding the workshop can be directed to Ms. Michiko Enomoto at enomoto@un.org and Ms. Caitlin Porter at caitlin.porter@un.org with copy to dinara.assaubayeva@un.org and escap-sonca@un.org.