

Summary the Second Global Workshop Webinar Series for the 2020 VNR Countries

On the 17th, 18th, 25th, 26th and 31st March 2020, the Office of Intergovernmental Support and Coordination for Sustainable Development (OISC), DESA hosted a series of global webinars for the 2020 VNR countries. The webinars were organized in place of the Second Global Workshop for the 2020 Voluntary National Reviews (VNR) Countries, which was cancelled due to COVID-19. Approximately 80 participants from the 2020 VNR countries joined each of the webinars.

The first day of the Global Webinars for 2020 VNR countries, 17th March, covered the progress of the VNR countries in their preparations as well as the scope and content of the VNR reports. OISC delivered introductory presentations and five countries, Ecuador, Kenya, Moldova, Nigeria and Seychelles shared their country experience and VNR roadmaps. The interactive session allowed VNR countries to ask the presenting countries questions, such as how to showcase interlinkages, synergies and trade-offs of the SDGs in the VNR report; how second time presenters were seeking to show progress in their second VNR; and how the countries are managing to continue stakeholder consultations and progress for the VNR during this time.

On the second day of the Global Webinars, 18th March, OISC provided guidance on the VNR presentations at the High-Level Political Forum for Sustainable Development (HLPF) and Division for Sustainable Development Goals (DSDG) gave a presentation on the follow-up actions after countries have presented their VNR at the HLPF. Two countries, Estonia and Georgia, gave presentations on their VNR progress as well as peer-review and twinning initiatives they were engaged in. A colleague from UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) also joined the initiative to provide more information on the initiative of twinning of first and second time VNR countries in the Asia-Pacific region. There was also an interactive Q&A and countries discussed how leaving no one behind was being incorporated in countries VNR preparations. Countries also shared the various tools they were using in the preparing their VNR reports. There were specific questions on the format and expectations of the VNR presentation during the 2020 HLPF.

On the 25th March the webinar focused on two topics: *Stakeholder engagement for the VNRs and SDG implementation* and *Financing and Mobilizing Resources for SDG implementation*. The webinar on the 26th March focused on *Data for national implementation of the SDGs and the VNRs* and *Engagement of the government and public institutions in the VNRs process and SDG implementation*.

On the 25th of March during session on *Stakeholder engagement*, the Division of Sustainable Development Goals delivered an introductory presentation and four countries including Argentina, India, The Gambia and Honduras shared their country experience in engaging stakeholders in the VNR preparations. Many countries raised the challenge of conducting stakeholder consultations in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Participants also highlighted how they are addressing leaving no one behind in their VNR report. Nevertheless, some countries exchanged measures they were taking to ensure business continuity in preparing their VNRs. During the session on *Financing and Mobilizing Resources for SDG implementation*, the *Financing for Sustainable Development Office* delivered an introductory presentation and Nepal delivered a country presentation about SDG costing and aligning budgets to the SDGs. It was also noted

that the Financing for Development Agenda was aligned with the 2030 Agenda. The participants were able to exchange views on the strategies for mobilizing resources for the SDGs.

On the 26th of March during the session on *Data for national implementation of the SDGs and the VNRs*, the *Statistics Division* delivered an introductory presentation. The presentation highlighted how to communicate data and results in the VNR; how to address data gaps and conduct quality assurance and monitoring of data. The presentation highlighted revisions to the SDG indicator framework as by the Statistical Commission at its fifty-first session in March 2020. Representatives of the national statistical office in four countries, including Kyrgyzstan, Liberia, North Macedonia and Mozambique shared their country experiences and best practices in data collection, analysis and monitoring for the SDGs. During the session on *Engagement of the government and public institutions in the VNRs process and SDG implementation*, the *Division on Public Institutions and Digital Government* delivered an introductory presentation and four countries, including Belize, Costa Rica, Finland and Slovenia. The countries highlighted initiatives that were implemented in their country for coordination and breaking silos in the implementation of the SDGs and preparation of the VNRs.

The series of five webinars for 2020 VNR country cohort concluded on Tuesday, 31 March with a webinar for 2020 francophone countries who all participated in the session. The webinar outlined main messages from the English webinars on the scope of the VNR report, presentation at the HLPF, financing for sustainable development, engagement of stakeholders, data and institutions. The three VNR countries made their presentations to show where they are in their preparations: Benin, Burundi and Morocco. All countries expressed challenges they are encountering due to the COVID-19 pandemic especially in regard to engagement of stakeholders, but all said they were determined to finalize their preparations and present their VNRs at the HLPF.