

Q&A for national reviews at the 2016 HLPF

Q: What should be the scope of national reviews at the HLPF?

A: In the long term, the scope of national reviews at the HLPF is expected to be the whole 2030 Agenda. Since the implementation of the 2030 Agenda only started on 1 January 2016, countries are not expected to already be able to report on the review of 2030 Agenda and SDGs. Rather, they could choose to focus on strategies and policies that are being put in place to facilitate implementation. Nevertheless, countries may decide to share any progress and accomplishments related to activities supporting the 2030 Agenda and whether a baseline for the SDGs has been defined.

Q: What is going to be the format of national reviews at the HLPF?

A: In order to foster the sharing of experiences and lessons learned, the Secretary-General's report on "critical milestones towards coherent, efficient and inclusive follow-up and review at the global level" suggested that the format should be interactive. The information could be grouped around findings, good practices, challenges, lessons learned, areas that need support and shared experiences.

Q: How could voluntary common reporting guidelines help presentation of national reviews at the HLPF?

A: The guidelines are flexible and serve only as a framework to make reporting more uniform and therefore more comparable. Initial guidelines have been proposed by the Secretary-General in his report on "critical milestones towards coherent, efficient and inclusive follow-up and review at the global level". The guidelines could evolve over time and be revised as more experience of national reviews of progress on Agenda 2030 accumulates.

Q: Is it necessary for Member States to submit a written report before the national reviews at the HLPF? And if so when?

A: The expectation is that each country being reviewed may present a focused report. Producing a report as background to a national presentation may actually facilitate the process of preparation of the national reviews, by crystallizing the efforts made to collect data and involve stakeholders. The guidelines proposed by the Secretary-General are organized

like the sections of a report, for convenience. Reports, if so produced by countries presenting at the HLPF, should be sent to the HLPF Secretariat (Division for Sustainable Development) before the annual session of the HLPF for posting on the HLPF website.

What is in the voluntary guidelines proposed by the Secretary-General?

The guidelines suggest broad themes that reviews could consider. These are indicative, they aim at suggesting a broad structure, and countries are not expected to report on all of them. In the Secretary-general's report, the themes are presented like sections or blocks of a report. The main blocks are: national priorities for sustainable development and their relations to the SDGs, critical challenges; methodology and process used for the preparation of the review; creating ownership of the SDGs; incorporation of the SDGs in national frameworks; integration of the three dimensions; progress on goals and targets; thematic analysis; institutional mechanisms; means of implementation; and next steps.

Q: Are the National Reviews expected to include statistics and indicators and corresponding analysis supporting the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda?

A: It is not expected that statistics and indicators be a main focus of national reviews. Countries may want to illustrate the main elements of the reviews with figures showing trends, as appropriate. Countries may include an annex with data, using national indicators and/or the global SDG indicators proposed by the Statistical Commission.

Q: How much time will countries have to present their national reviews at the HLPF?

A: Taking into account the time limitations of 8 days of HLPF (including 3 days of the ministerial segment), it is being envisaged that countries will have presentation of reviews both at the first 5 days of HLPF as well as during the ministerial segment. It is envisaged that interactive discussions will be organized and that each country will have adequate time to present their most important points. Consultations are underway to identify the most effective ways for presenting national reports at the HLPF.

Q: At what level should countries be represented for their national reviews at the HLPF?

A: Since it is envisaged that reviews would take place both at the first 5 days of HLPF and at the ministerial segment, the level should be adapted to both occasions accordingly. Senior government officials are expected to be present during the first 5 days, and officials with the rank of Minister or equivalent are expected to attend the 3-day ministerial segment.

Q: How will DESA and other UN entities support countries in their preparation for the national reviews at the HLPF?

A: Depending on request for support by countries for the preparation of their reviews, DESA and other UN entities will work with them to identify countries' needs and provide capacity building in these areas.

DESA will also support the President of ECOSOC to conduct a robust preparatory process for the preparation of country reviews, including by creating space for them to come together before the HLPF, to learn and share experiences from each other and identify areas where they need support.

Q: How will major groups, other stakeholders and partnerships be involved in national reporting?

The HLPF will support participation in follow-up and review processes by the major groups and other relevant stakeholders in line with resolution 67/290. Regarding specific modalities for engagement of MGoS in national reporting, they are likely to vary from country to country and are to be decided on by the national governments making voluntary presentations.

Q: What will be the follow-up of national reviews at the HLPF?

In their inputs to the Secretary-General's report on "critical milestones towards coherent, efficient and inclusive follow-up and review at the global level", Member States expressed different views on this issue. In particular, some were of the view that there should be no follow-up to the reviews, which are voluntary. Therefore, this point may have to be further discussed among UN Member States.

One suggestion made by the Secretary-General in his report is that in addition to political recommendations included in the HLPF Ministerial Declaration, more detailed recommendations for countries that presented a review could be included in a summary of the President of ECOSOC. These recommendations could be used by countries having presented at the HLPF as a source of information, guidance, or support for the mobilization of resources, including for capacity building.