



**Asia Regional Meeting  
Kathmandu, Nepal  
24-26 September 2019**

**Title of sessions:**

Session 7: National progress and voluntary national reporting processes

**Objective(s):**

The Session is to discuss the national progress on Voluntary National Reviews (VNR) and the national governments' reporting at the UN High-Level Political Reviews on Sustainable Development held in 2018 and 2019. It will highlight the challenges and lessons learnt on how various stakeholders, particularly local authorities (LAs) and civil society organisations (CSOs) are engaged and partnered in the processes. Most importantly, it will talk about how the VNR as a potential methodology for multi-stakeholder engagement in advancing the SDGs.

**Expected Results:**

The session will result in the increased understanding of different mechanisms used as well as the differing levels of engagement in current monitoring of SDG progress in Asia. It should produce recommendations on how the engagement of central and local governments and civil society can be strengthened in national conversations to discuss, implement and monitor the SDGs, using the VNR process as a concrete entry point.

**Background:**

As part of their commitment to realise the 2030 Agenda, countries are implementing the SDGs and regularly report on the progress. Levels of engagement with the government vary across the region. In some countries, parallel processes of reporting have been carried out in tandem with the government; in other cases, there are official mechanisms for consultation and inclusion, and in others, much work remains to be done to ensure that all actors are part of the discussion. In this session, strategies used in different national contexts will be shared in order to improve the ways SDG implementation is monitored and all development actors are held accountable.

Since 2016, twenty-eight Asian countries presented their VNRs and five more committed to presenting a VNR in 2020. Pakistan reported for the first time in July 2019 and was amongst the first countries to integrate SDGs into national development plans in February 2016. Indonesia reported its VNR in 2017 and 2019. With the theme of "Empowering People and Ensuring Inclusiveness and Equality," Indonesia has made effort in engaging various stakeholders through off and on-line consultation process. The country was able to reduce its poverty to a single digit for the first time in its history. The Mongolian Government was involved in the creation, in 2017, of the Consultative Body on the VNR process for 2019. This body is considered a successful mechanism by its members for sharing input into the VNR, and some are advocating the institutionalisation of the initiative beyond 2019.

Despite the effort, however, only a few countries in Asia have engaged LAs in the VNR process. LAs are involved or consulted through national mechanisms (Japan and Indonesia, in India and Pakistan only state governments have been consulted) and subnational mechanisms at regional or local levels (China, India, Indonesia, Philippines). Some countries have multi-stakeholder national mechanisms but LAs are not directly associated (Korea, Malaysia, Thailand) while some countries do not have defined coordination mechanisms yet.

**Methodology:**

The session will be made lively with key questions raised by a moderator. Interaction between participants and panelists will be encouraged to ensure the discussions are reflecting participants' needs and interest.



- Moderator will explain the objective of the session and introduce the panel speakers
- Via pointed questions from the moderator, each speaker will share briefly their VNR processes and reporting experience
- Short panel debate around key questions, with participation from the floor

**Key questions:**

- What are the existing mechanisms at country level to consult on the design, implementation and reporting on SDGs? Is that mechanism inclusive of all stakeholders? What works well? What is missing?
- How do those mechanisms improve the monitoring and implementation of SDGs?
- In the development of your country's voluntary national report, how were multiple and marginalized stakeholders included? Were those mechanisms existing, ad hoc, etc. and will they continue beyond the reporting process?
- What should be done differently in order to improve engagement or involvement of various stakeholders in SDGs attainment?
- How can local authorities and their actions have more impact at national level?