

Talking Points

ECE regional Forum on Sustainable Development

VLR-VNR studio 30 March 2023

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- Dear Colleagues, I would like to start by congratulating my colleagues from ECE to organize this VLR-VNR studio. I am honored to participate on behalf of the United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs.
- As you are aware, DESA is organizing the High-Level Political Forum from 10-19 July 2023 in New York. The Regional Forums on Sustainable Development organized by the 5 Regional Commissions provide the regional perspective prior to the HLPF in July.
- National Governments are assessing their progress towards the SDGs. During the HLPF, 42 Voluntary National reviews will be presented, including 14 VNRs from ECE Member States and the European Union. Many of the countries are presenting their second VNR.
- On the "second generation of VNRs", we want to go further:
 - deepening the analysis to showcase impacts;
 - improving localization;
 - broadening consultations with stakeholders;
 - improving engagement with the private sector;
 - and enhancing the use of science and data.
- Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs) and Voluntary Subnational Reviews (VSRs) can foster policy transformation towards the achievement of the SDGs. VNRs, VLRs and VSRs provide a common methodology and benchmark to assess the current status, engage all stakeholder groups and help identify necessary actions.

- High-impact localization policies and partnerships can close the gap in the implementation of the SDGs. It is thus not only of interest of a municipality to conduct a VLR, but provides means to advance the SDGs at the national level. It should be in the interest of the national government to support local and regional governments in the process.
- Of course this can be challenging at times. Getting reliable data for the VLR can be difficult. Often relevant data is available, but not accessible as data is either not in the required format or cannot easily be shared between government entities at various levels.
- I am looking forward to the discussions today particularly on how some governments were able to work together to improve data collection and analysis.
- I would like to close with a word from the Secretary General António Guterres: We need new resolve and ways of working together that are suited to the challenges we face and the diverse landscape of actors (public, civic and private) that have the capacity to contribute to solutions.