



2018 VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REVIEWS FOR THE HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT BACKGROUND AND KEY MESSAGES

Background on the Voluntary National Reviews

In September 2015, the United Nations unanimously adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which went into effect in January 2016. The annual High-Level Political Forum is the main space for follow-up and review of the SDGs at the global level. There are national and regional review mechanisms that feed into the High-Level Political Forum. Each year when the High-Level Political Forum meets, governments can volunteer to present reports on national progress towards implementation of the SDGs.

In July 2018, 48 countries will present Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) of SDG progress during the High-Level Political Forum at the United Nations. The following countries where ChildFund members have a presence will present VNRs: Australia, Benin, Canada, Ecuador, Guinea, Ireland, Kiribati, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mali, Mexico, Paraguay, Senegal, Spain, Sri Lanka, Togo and Vietnam. These reviews will feed into a global review of progress towards the achievement of the SDGs.

As Member States prepare their national reports on the SDG progress, they are encouraged to hold consultations with a diverse group of stakeholders, including marginalized and vulnerable groups.¹ While there are suggested guidelines for the format and content of the written reports, each country will approach the review process differently.² Thus, the format, timing and outreach for the consultations will vary. Some possible formats for the consultations include: an online consultation, a survey, or an in-person dialogue.

In the countries where ChildFund Alliance members have a presence, offices may have a chance to participate in these consultations. This is an opportunity to continue our collective work within the Alliance promoting the participation of children and advocating for the prevention of violence against children within the SDGs. This document is intended to provide useful background information and an overview of key messages for offices that have the opportunity to participate in the national review processes. These overall messages should be supplemented by messages and asks relevant to individual national and subnational contexts.

Resources on Lessons Learned from the 2017 Voluntary National Reviews³

As ChildFund Alliance member offices contribute to the VNRs, we will be building a set of case examples on this engagement to serve as guidance for members. In the meantime, UNICEF has shared some

¹*Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, paragraph 79; UNDG, *Guidelines to Support Country Reporting on the Sustainable Development Goals*, January 2017, p. 9.

² The [UN Secretary General's guidelines](#) for these reviews are being updated and the revised guidelines should be available in early 2018. For more information, please see these reports with recommendations from [Together 2030](#) and [World Vision](#) for improving the reporting guidelines.

³ Note: to access you will need to set up an account on the [Members Only](#) area of the ChildFund Alliance website.

resources based on engagement of UNICEF offices in the 2017 VNRs: [Case Studies from UNICEF engagement in 2017](#); [UNICEF Analysis of the 2017 VNRs](#); and [Perception Data in SDG Monitoring](#).

The table below shows which Alliance members are present in 2018 review countries.

VNR Country	ChildFund Alliance member(s) present
Australia	ChildFund Australia
Benin	Educo
Canada	CCFC
Ecuador	ChildFund International, Educo
Guinea	ChildFund International
Ireland	ChildFund Ireland
Kiribati	ChildFund New Zealand
Lao PDR	ChildFund Australia
Mali	ChildFund International
Mexico	ChildFund International
Paraguay	CCFC
Senegal	ChildFund International
Spain	Educo
Sri Lanka	ChildFund International
Togo	ChildFund International
Vietnam	ChildFund Australia

Green=Alliance Member Headquarters in VNR Country

Voluntary National Review Focal Point for Ireland

Each country submitting a VNR will have a focal person assigned. We suggest that you contact them to begin the discussion on the process and advocate for the key messages as outlined below. You may also want to include a short background on ChildFund Alliance and the SDGs.

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ChildFund Alliance and the SDGs

ChildFund Alliance is a global network of 11 child-focused development organizations working in more than 60 countries to create opportunities for children and youth, their families and communities. Our 2012-2015 global advocacy campaign “free from violence and exploitation” actively contributed to making child protection a global priority within the SDGs. Within our five-year strategic plan “[Toward a Safe World for Children](#),” we commit to **prevent** violence against children, **protect** children from violence and exploitation, and enable children to **participate** in decisions related to achieving the SDGs. In order for this commitment to be realized, children and violence against children must be visible in the SDG review processes. The national SDG review processes should include space for the voices of children to be heard and the national reporting should cover the SDG targets that contribute to the prevention and elimination of violence against children.

Key Messages for the 2018 Voluntary National Reviews

1. The voices and perspectives of children should be included in the consultations with civil society that are taking place at national and subnational levels and should be reflected in the reports prepared by governments.

- In order for the SDGs to deliver for children, children must have an opportunity to participate in the consultations that contribute to the review process.
- Civil society organizations working with children at the community level can provide an important link to children’s voices.
- The national reporting for the voluntary national reviews should describe efforts to engage children and young people in consultation processes.

2. National reporting should address the targets related to violence against children, including the identification of gaps in baseline data, and alignment with existing national development indicators and reporting mechanisms. These targets include:

16.2	End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children.
4.a	...provide safe, inclusive, non-violent and effective learning environments for all.
5.2	Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls, including trafficking, and sexual and other types of exploitation.
5.3	Eliminate all harmful practices such as child, early and forced marriage, and female genital mutilation.
8.7	...secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labor, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labor in all its forms.
16.9	By 2030, provide legal identity for all, including birth registration.

- Violence against children is a widespread issue that affects half of the world’s children.⁴
- Agenda 2030 explicitly acknowledges the need to address violence against children. Paragraph 8 of *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* presents a vision for “A world which invests in its children and in which every child grows up free from violence and exploitation.”

3. Children can play an important role in monitoring and evaluation efforts and in promoting accountability.

- ChildFund aims to ensure accountability for children related to SDG target 16.2 and related targets through our child-friendly accountability initiative, grounded in the understanding that “including children’s voices in relevant discussions and decisions improves their protection.”⁵
- Non-official data that is generated by civil society organizations and in particular by children themselves can address data gaps and enrich official data.

4. Countries that are pathfinding countries of the [Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children](#) should be asked to report on their efforts to end violence against children. This should draw on the [Country Guidance](#) as outlined by End Violence.

² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/vacs/>

⁵ ChildFund Alliance, [Child-Friendly Accountability Field Manual](#), p. 4.