

2017 High Level Political Forum Voluntary National Reviews



**SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT
GOALS**

**An analysis of the reports of the 43 governments who
presented a national review, from a child rights lens**

Produced by: The Agenda 2030 Unit
Public Partnerships Division (PPD) NYHQ
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BACKGROUND

Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) are government-led initiatives, whereby the government produces a report – often in consultation with different stakeholder groups – on their plans, activities and results with respect to their national implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The reports are then presented during the UN [High-Level Political Forum \(HLPF\)](#) at the annual meeting of the Forum in July at the United Nations Headquarters in New York.

The reports are *voluntary* – as noted in the [Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development Outcome Document](#) (para 74) -- but in the two years since the adoption of the Agenda in September 2015, 65 countries¹ have already reported to the HLPF in 2016 and 2017. An additional 48² countries are scheduled to report at HLPF 2018, signifying a substantial appetite among governments to showcase their work in implementing the SDGs at national level.

43 Countries who participated in a VNR in 2017				
Afghanistan	Argentina	Azerbaijan	Bangladesh	Belarus
Belgium	Belize	Benin	Botswana	Brazil
Chile	Costa Rica	Cyprus	Czech Republic	Denmark
El Salvador	Ethiopia	Guatemala	Honduras	India
Indonesia	Italy	Japan	Jordan	Kenya
Luxembourg	Malaysia	Maldives	Monaco	Nepal
The Netherlands	Nigeria	Panama	Peru	Portugal
Qatar	Slovenia	Sweden	Tajikistan	Thailand
Togo	Uruguay	Zimbabwe		

The UN System at the country-level is often called upon to assist the Government in the production of the report, including: providing technical knowledge and support; assessment of data availability and gaps; establishing SDG baselines; and facilitation of consultations with different stakeholder groups (e.g. children and youth, marginalized groups, etc.).

UNICEF Country and National Committee Offices whose Governments have participated in a VNR have received support for inputting into and influencing these processes from UNICEF HQ, notably through the [Key Asks and Principles for Voluntary National Review Activities](#) Document, coordinated by the Agenda 2030 Team in the Public Partnerships Division (PPD) in collaboration with Programme Division (PD); Division of Data, Research and Policy (DRP); Division of Communication (DOC); and Private Fundraising and Partnerships Division (PFP). The

¹ Afghanistan, Argentina, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Botswana, Brazil, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Egypt, El Salvador, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Guatemala, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mexico, Monaco, Montenegro, Morocco, Nepal, Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Samoa, Sierra Leone, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Thailand, Togo, Turkey, Uganda, Uruguay, Venezuela and Zimbabwe.

² Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Australia, Bahamas, Bahrain, Benin, Bhutan, Cabo Verde, Canada, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Greece, Guinea, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Jamaica, Kiribati, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lithuania, Mali, Malta, Mexico, Namibia, Niger, Paraguay, Poland, Qatar, Republic of the Congo, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, Slovakia, Spain, Sri Lanka, State of Palestine, Sudan, Switzerland, Togo, United Arab Emirates, Uruguay, Vietnam.

Asks are updated on a yearly basis, based on lessons learned from the previous HLPF as well as feedback from UNICEF Country Office users.

In addition to the main *Key Asks* document, in 2017 the Agenda 2030 Team -- together with relevant PD Sections -- also developed sector-specific issue briefs for five of the six goals that were reviewed at the 2017 HLPF: [Goal 1 \(No Poverty\)](#); [Goal 2 \(Zero Hunger\)](#); [Goal 3 \(Good Health and Well-Being\)](#); [Goal 5 \(Gender Equality\)](#); and [Goal 14 \(Life Below Water\)](#).

Both the *Keys Asks* and the *Sector Specific Issue Briefs* were also used for global-level political advocacy. To that end, notably stronger references to children and youth at HLPF 2017 as compared to HLPF 2016 marked a positive step forward and evidenced effective advocacy efforts throughout the year. The [2017 Ministerial Declaration](#) featured a strong paragraph on children, adolescents and youth stating “[We] **Recognize children, adolescents and youth as important agents of change and underline the necessity of investing in them with a view to addressing multidimensional deprivations, ending intergenerational poverty, harnessing the demographic dividend and empowering them to build a more prosperous future.**”

The Group of Friends (GoF) of Children and the SDGs continues to be an effective and results-oriented group of Member States, who also [delivered a powerful statement on children](#), whereby 53 of the 55 Members of the Group chose to align to the statement in their national capacities. The statement, delivered by the Minister of Environment from the Government of Luxembourg, noted: “**We recognize the value of being long-term advocates for children’s rights in SDG implementation processes from the local to the global level...[and] investing in all children from the earliest age and in children and youth through the second decade of life is imperative for building the human capital required to turn demographic transitions into growth dividends that reduce poverty and generate prosperity.**”

The following document is an analysis of the 43 countries who produced a VNR in 2017, specifically looking for key references to children, adolescents and youth. It is intended to assist UNICEF staff in Country, Regional, Headquarters and National Committee Offices in identifying opportunities to work with governments on key aspects of SDG implementation for children or to address challenges children face in the places where we work.

The report has been produced by the Agenda 2030 Unit in the Public Partnerships Division (PPD), NYHQ.

MAJOR RECURRENT THEMES IN THE 2017 REPORTS

1. The importance of localization of SDG targets and translating plans and strategies into action

The vast majority of countries highlighted the processes taken or underway in aligning national plans and strategies with the SDGs. The degree to which Agenda 2030 had been integrated into national plans varied. Several especially strong VNRs included details as to which SDG targets and indicators had been localized into national statistical systems.

Most countries engaged in a mapping of the SDGs to existing plans, strategies and laws, to identify which ministries are responsible for what and where gaps may be. Some countries then simply used the mapping to demonstrate the country’s commitment to Agenda 2030. **Cyprus** for instance, did not report a National Development Plan but instead mentioned a mapping of existing efforts to the SDGs. The concern with this

strategy is that by retrofitting a business-as-usual approach into the ambitious agenda, necessary shifts or reforms will not be addressed.

Most countries, however, used the mappings for consultations and to inform national strategies. **India**, for instance, after conducting a national mapping of ministries and initiatives to the SDGs, used the mapping for consultations with government and public partners resulting in the development of a 3-year action plan, 7-year strategy, and a 15-year vision. This more common approach is a preferred system of inclusive and meaningful localization of Agenda 2030 that maintains a focus on implementation and action toward achieving the SDGs.

A few countries explicitly referred to yearly or biannual national reporting mechanisms. **Denmark** will publish an annual progress report which is then presented to Parliament. **Italy** will annually report on progress of its national development plan, which is aligned to the SDGs. **India** will conduct bi-annual reviews with state governments on SDG implementation. These efforts formalize the monitoring of national SDG progress and reflect a commitment to national ownership of Agenda 2030. It is also important that more frequent, locally- and nationally-sensitive reporting occurs in addition to the global reporting at the HLPF, which will likely be less frequent.

2. Securing the involvement of different line ministries and levels of government

The vast majority of countries detailed which line ministries were responsible for SDG implementation and monitoring at the national level. Many governments have formed an inter-ministerial task team, secretariat, committee or managing body in order to coordinate the national sectors on SDG efforts and break down traditional silos. Many countries also have multiple groups that coordinate different levels of information such as **Costa Rica** which established a coordination group for policy coordination, with supporting secretariats for tasks such as ensuring participation and identifying gaps, and then an institute for the national collection on indicators. The most common ministries in charge of SDG coordination were those of Foreign Affairs, Finance, Economy, and Planning, but varied from country to country.

The importance of mainstreaming the national efforts to regional, state or municipal levels of government was also addressed regularly. The status of municipal governments engaging with SDG localization appeared to be in beginning stages with national governments mostly mentioning awareness trainings for encouraging the integration of the SDGs into subnational plans. For example, **Brazil** and its National Confederation of Municipalities held trainings with municipal managers resulting in SDG targets being included in several municipal multi-year plans. Jordan has reportedly initiated the mainstreaming of the SDGs into all 12 governorate development plans at the subnational level.

Beyond involvement of different levels of government, most countries also reported multi-stakeholder participation and engagement, with civil society, academia, the private sector, the media, children and youth being the most common stakeholder groups mentioned.

3. The importance of public awareness and participation, including child and youth participation

The importance of getting the public (civil society, the private sector, ordinary citizens) *aware of* and *involved in* SDG implementation -- including the compilation of the VNR -- was highlighted across many of the reports, with a recognition that their active participation will be essential to the successful

operationalization of the SDGs in their respective countries.

Children and/or youth were often explicitly mentioned as a key constituency that should be reached through schools, workshops, consultations and child parliaments. In fact 35 of the 43 VNRs specifically mention consultations with children and youth. While having a mention of importance of participation in the VNRs is a step in the right direction, a number of reports did not go into great detail regarding *how* that consultation influenced their report or *concrete follow-up actions* being taken as a result. It is important that the consultative process is not viewed as an end in itself, but rather as a tool to support more efficient, effective and responsive governance. Furthermore, participation should be ongoing, localized and relevant to the daily lives and experiences of constituents being consulted.

Notable examples of good practice in working with children and youth were highlighted in the VNRs of: **Belgium, Botswana, Chile, Denmark, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Japan, Jordan, Malaysia, Slovenia** and **Zimbabwe** among others. For instance, the **Denmark** report mentioned that primary and secondary schools have taken initiatives to integrate learning about the SDGs, global development and sustainability into the curriculum and to work with children and young people to develop solutions to the SDGs. Since 2015, the Danish version of the [World's Largest Lesson](#), "Verdenstimen", has spread to primary and secondary schools with a growing interest among school teachers and students. **Slovenia** had a special report in their VNR that was compiled by the National Youth Council of Slovenia entitled: *Youth in Slovenia in the context of the 2030 Agenda*. Having this report written by youth directly featured in the VNR could be a useful model for other countries to replicate. During the forum itself, **Belgium, the Netherlands, Thailand, Slovenia** and **Sweden** all included a youth delegate in their national delegation and as a contributor to the VNR presentation.

Overall these references to children and youth awareness and participation provide an excellent opportunity for UNICEF and partners to follow-up and continue to cultivate their meaningful participation, and that children and youth awareness and participation remain common themes for SDG implementation and monitoring efforts.

4. **Children, Adolescents and Youth as a Cross Cutting issue and other notable references**

With only a few exceptions, the situation of children, adolescents and youth were widely reported in most of the VNRs. The Goals "under review" during the 2017 HLPF -- Goal 1 (No poverty); Goal 2 (Zero Hunger); Goal 3 (Good Health and Well-being); Goal 5 (Gender Equality); Goal 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure) and Goal 14 (Life under water) – provided a useful channel to focus on children and youth as a number of those goals are directly related to children's rights. That being said, governments varied in their reports as to whether they focused on all SDGs, the SDGs under review in 2017 or a subset of the Goals of their choosing.

Positively, a number of reports looked at issues of equity and at the specific situation of children living in poverty. For example, **Belgium, Belize, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Japan, Indonesia, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Portugal, Thailand** and **Zimbabwe** all explicitly mentioned child poverty and how they were addressing or measuring this issue. Even for those governments that did not specifically mention measurement of child poverty, the vast majority highlighted social protection systems and programmes targeted at particularly vulnerable groups, of which children were regularly referenced.

References to child health, nutrition, education, protection (from violence) and early childhood development were present throughout many reports. A positive recognition of early childhood interventions/ECD in many of the reports was welcomed. For example in the VNRs of **Brazil, Honduras, Indonesia, Panama, Qatar** and **Uruguay** among others.

On the issue of youth, **Jordan's** report addressed children and youth as a cross-cutting theme of SDG implementation, mentioning the “demographic dividend” as a reason for including children and youth in SDG implementation and explicitly stating, “Jordan cannot move forward in achieving the SDGs without optimal investment in half of its population or its youth who represent approximately a third of the population...The forthcoming *National Youth Empowerment Strategy* is also seen to be a tool for young people to be seen as “peace makers and positive change makers.”

A common challenge is the varying terms applied inconsistently to “young people” (children, adolescents, youth, young people), but a lack of a common understanding or definitions of what these terms mean in terms of age groups, whilst also an overlapping of ages within this terminology. UNICEF will continue to advocate for children and adolescents rights within these reporting processes while also recognizing that “youth” is a key constituency that overlaps but also extends into young adulthood.

5. The importance of data

Data was referred to in almost every report as both a critical asset and great challenge to SDG implementation and monitoring efforts at the national level. The challenges are not limited to low income countries, as the lack of available statistics for the full global set of indicators was a common theme among middle and high income countries as well. Missing data, lack of comparable data, data that cannot be disaggregated and lack of recent data were among the common challenges. In a small number of the VNRs, statistical annexes were included, but the majority of VNRs lacked a comprehensive summary of current status and trends in SDG indicators.

Assistance with data collection and establishing SDG benchmarks is a space where governments will look to the UN, including UNICEF, for technical assistance. A particularly good example of this comes from the UNICEF **Indonesia** Country Office, which produced a [SDG Baseline Report on Children in Indonesia](#) in partnership with the Government (Ministry of National Development Planning). This involved supporting the GoI to define appropriate child-related indicators, identifying existing and potential national sources of data, establishing preliminary baseline estimates and identifying data gaps that need to be addressed in order to enhance future monitoring of the situation of children in Indonesia.

In addition to official data and statistics, some countries have also begun to explore collection and use of *perception data* as a useful complement to official statistics. This gathering of people's perceptions and lived experiences can also aid in more responsive and informed policies, plans, strategies and actions. UNICEF is assisting a number of governments in this endeavor using our mobile outreach tool, [U-Report](#). The Governments of **Guatemala** and **Zimbabwe** specifically mentioned these activities in their VNRs.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM INDIVIDUAL VNRS



AFGHANISTAN

The *Afghanistan Voluntary National Review* describes the nationalization process of the SDG targets and indicators, considering the specific circumstances and context of the country. The report highlights both areas of improvement and the progress required to be made in order to meet the MDGs by 2020 and the SDGs by 2030. While the country is dedicated to achieve the SDGs by 2030, they adopted the MDGs five years late given conflict in the country and thus pledged to achieve the MDGs by 2020 via the *Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020*.

The SDGs Secretariat has been established within the Ministry of Economy to work on the national documentation of the SDGs and to coordinate the development efforts of various sectors, reporting on these efforts annually to the High Council of Ministers and the Cabinet. The High Council of Ministers is ultimately overseeing the nationalization, alignment, budgeting and implementation of the SDGs. The SDG nationalization process resulted in 125 national targets and 190 national indicators, slightly less than the global set. To ensure that reporting against the indicators and targets takes place consistently, an Executive Committee on the SDGs will be established within the Office of the Chief Executive. The SDGs Executive Committee is co-chaired by UNDP. While the UN System and Country Team was mentioned in a few sections, it is of note that UNICEF was not specifically referenced in the report.

The topic of the 2017 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, ‘Eradicating Poverty and Promoting Prosperity in a Changing World’, reportedly “resonates well with the Afghan domestic and international policy agenda to support and protect vulnerable and marginalized groups. Afghanistan will give special priority to **efforts to ensure that girls and women, people with disabilities, young people, ethnic minorities and people affected by conflict and crisis are enjoying well-being and not suffering from extreme poverty.**” A data snapshot reports that poverty has actually increased in the country from 36 to 39%. This increase in poverty is concentrated in rural areas which increased even more, by 14% in two years. The introduction of the VNR by the Minister of Economy, Abdul Sattar Murad, explicitly says that “Afghanistan’s youth, who constitute the absolute majority of the population, as well as women and the poor, demand and deserve the life chances denied them for three decades.”

Participation was mentioned in a number of sections of the VNR, highlighting the consultative process Afghanistan implemented during the nationalization of the SDGs. In April of 2017, Afghanistan **consulted and coordinated with 600 Afghan youth through a three-day National Youth Symposium**. In May, two symposiums were organized by academia with student on the SDGs, one at the American University of Afghanistan with more than 300 students and another at Katib University in Kabul with more than 260 students and teachers participating. There was a specific call in the VNR to continue engaging stakeholders. “Vibrant awareness raising campaigns...need to be carried out at both national and subnational levels.”

In references to the situation of children, **Afghanistan's report highlighted access to education, especially for girls, the elimination of violence against children with a focus on child marriage challenges, and the country's high rates of maternal and child mortality.** There was no mention of policies or actions Afghanistan is taking towards addressing their continued challenges with child malnutrition which was a weakness of the report given their acknowledgement at being a "food deficit country." Given the HLPF 2017 focus on poverty, the report states that "education, health and social protections are the three main dimensions of the poverty. It is very essential and effective to invest in these three areas in order to reduce poverty." Afghanistan reports that in 2016, "around 18% of the national budget is allocated in the above mentioned three sectors." Through social protection measures and safety net programs, Afghanistan is working to cover 35,000 vulnerable families with children under 10 years old.

Education is deemed an important advancement of the country in despite of and for the prevention of conflict. "Our people must have confidence that their government can give them better life chances than a return to insurgency will, that their children will be healthy and educated, that they can trust in the law," the report writes. "They must have faith that their government will be able to match its promises with real actions that inspire hope and improve their lives." In 2001 only 900,000 youth were in school, today 9 million young Afghans are in school, 40% of them being girls. Yet still, the national attendance rate is a low 54% with disparities among children living in poverty and rural areas. According to 2013-14 statistics, school attendance has actually decreased for poor children by 6%. The school attendance rate for poor children is 48% while 62% for children not living in poverty. The report also credits poor employment opportunities as drawing young people to anti-government efforts and violence: "The vicious cycle of conflict intensifies poverty, which further feeds conflict and insecurity."

Improving child and maternal mortality rates and protecting women and girls against violence were national priorities of the VNR. As reducing child mortality was MDG 4, the under-five mortality rate declined from 181 per 1000 births in 1990 to 91 per 1000 in 2015. Yet Afghanistan recognizes that "the rate is still very high" and that the country didn't reach the MDG target of a 2/3 reduction. The maternal mortality rate is also "very high compare[d] to the neighbouring countries."

Afghanistan is also **introducing new initiatives to eliminate violence against children, working specifically by eliminating early child marriage and forced marriage practices.** The VNR reports that "forced marriages of children and obscene traditions have horrific impacts on women's social protection." Proportion of women aged 20-24 years who were married or in a union before age 15 and before age 18 is 17% while male married in the same ages reaches to 3%." However the report mentions that these are figures from a survey and there are no available reliable figures. The planned target for this indicator in Afghanistan is 10% which going to be achieved by 2030.

Afghanistan's VNR was strong in both setting national aims towards the ambitious Agenda 2030 in addition to referencing the host of challenges the country faces in achieving the SDGs. A critical next step the VNR mentions is the need to localize the SDGs at provincial level with awareness raising and data adjustments. Data capacity for stronger data availability will notably be a critical investment in better addressing the needs of and engaging the voices of children in SDG contexts.

See full report: [Voluntary National Review at the High Level Political Forum: SDGs' Progress Report Afghanistan](#)





ARGENTINA

Argentina's *El Consejo Nacional de Coordinación de Políticas Sociales* (CNCPS) was established in December 2015 with a mandate for coordinating the country's implementation of the SDGs. It involves 26 different institutions. Strategic allies for the CNCPS are the Legislative Branch and the Judicial Branch, which can create a legal conducive environment and ensure that public budgets reflect the commitments made.

In their VNR, Argentina reported on their efforts to **assist children and families in vulnerable situations, reduce the rate of teen pregnancy and include young people in government decisions**. In recent years there has been an uptick in the number of teen pregnancies in Argentina -- the rate was 69% in 2014 for 15-19 year olds. The Government has set the goal of lowering this rate to 65% by 2020 and 60% by 2030.

The Argentinian Government has created social welfare programs to provide vulnerable citizens, including children and pregnant women, with assistance, such as a federal food program; the Universal Child Allowance (AUH) which assists 9.3% of the population; and public interventions for different social sectors: education, health, labor, housing and sewage, housing and urban planning and social security.

To focus more exclusively on children and youth, **Argentina plans to build 10,000 kindergartens for children aged 3-4 and to construct neighborhood centers for early childhood and youth**. The Government is also making efforts to promote the participation of groups that are typically ignored, such as youth, in all levels of decision making through broad exchanges. One effort was to train young people by **translating all SDG materials into indigenous languages** so all facets of the Argentinian society can learn about the SDGs.

See Full Report: [Argentina: Informe Voluntario Nacional](#)



AZERBAIJAN

Azerbaijan is a young country where children (0-14) and young people make up 47.6% of the population.

In October 2016, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan issued the Decree to establish the National Coordination Council for Sustainable Development of the Republic of Azerbaijan (NCCSD). This Council has four associated working groups on: economic development and decent employment; social issues; environmental issues; and monitoring and evaluation.

As part of the VNR preparatory process, Azerbaijan undertook an analysis of how well the SDGs were integrated into current national plans and policies and where gaps existed, as well as the availability of indicators for evaluating the results (page 27).

Azerbaijan noted that ownership, participation and public awareness raising were important to achieving

progress on the SDGs and that state authorities, civil society institutes, business representatives, scientific and educational establishments, mass media and international organizations should be involved. A **presentation to children aged 11-14, specifically on the importance of SDG 4/Education**, was conducted in April 2017 as part of the VNR process (page 32). The Government has also acknowledged that **youth are a cross-cutting issue and consulted with young people as part of the VNR process**.

Azerbaijan reports great strides in reducing poverty in their country where they note that the absolute poverty rate was reduced from 49% in 2001 to 4.9% by 2015 (page 4). An inclusive and targeted social protection system has been formed in the country that combines all elements characteristic of social protection (page 36). **Children are mentioned as beneficiaries in this system** though the specific issue of “child poverty” is not explicitly mentioned. The Government is providing social assistance to 126.7 thousand families, 53.2% of those receiving the assistance are children and 1% are children with disabilities.

On the issues of child health and nutrition, the report notes that the share of under-weight children under 5 years dropped from 6.8% to 0.6% during 2001-2015 (page 12) and that under-5 child deaths per 1000 live births dropped from 30.5 to 13.3 in this same time period (page 4). Azerbaijan has **implemented several state programs for improving mother and child health: *The State Program for Improving Mother and Child Health (2014-2020); The State Program for Compulsory Medical Examination of Children; The Action Program on Immunoprophylaxis in Infectious Diseases among Children (2016-2020); and The State Committee on Family, Women and Children’s Affairs*** with the goal to improve the quality of treatment and preventative care provided to mothers and children and to further improve their health status.

The Azerbaijani Government has committed to adopting ***the Children’s Code and the National Children’s Strategy alongside adopting programs such as the Youth Development Strategy in Azerbaijan (2015-2025) and Azerbaijani Youth in a State Program (2017-2021)*** with the Ministry of Youth and Sports. As part of the Children’s Strategy, one of the goals set is the establishment of: the “Family Psychologist” Institute; help centers and shelters for people subjected to domestic violence; and a system for monitoring cases of violence, evasion of education and early marriage in the country.

See full report: [Azerbaijan 2030: From the Millennium Development Goals Towards the Sustainable Development Goals](#)



BANGLADESH

Bangladesh has made significant strides on many development outcomes over the course of the MDGs and is now considered a lower middle income country. A *SDGs Implementation and Monitoring Committee* has been formed at the Prime Minister’s Office to facilitate and implementation of a SDGs Action Plan and the SDGs have also been integrated into the nation’s 7th *Five*

Year Plan (FYP). The Bangladesh Planning Commission conducted a review of various means of data generation in the country. Bangladesh has data for 70 indicators and partially available data for 108 indicators but need to devise new mechanism for data mining for the remaining 63 indicators. As part of the VNR, Bangladesh particularly focused on the Goals receiving in-depth review at the HLPF in 2017: Goal 1 (No poverty); Goal 2 (Zero Hunger); Goal 3 (Good Health and Well-being); Goal 5 (Gender Equality); Goal 9 (Innovation and

Infrastructure) and Goal 14 (Life under water). They also reported on consulting with students and youth organizations as part of the process.

On the issue of ending poverty, Bangladesh reports that the national poverty rate was 56.7% in 1991, which came down to 24.3% in 2016 and the extreme poverty rate was 41.1% in 1991, which declined to 12.9% in 2016. **Building disaster resilience and implementing a comprehensive *National Social Security Strategy* are two means by which the Government is addressing poverty. Women, children, the elderly and disabled people are particularly targeted** (page 10), although there was not a specific mention of measuring child poverty rates.

Strides have also been made in the area of hunger and malnutrition, but significant challenges remain. In Bangladesh, **32.6% of children are underweight and 36.1% are stunted**, though in 1990, 66% of children were underweight and in 2004, 50.6% of children were stunted. Approximately 1/3 of children and ½ of pregnant women are anaemic due to micronutrient deficiencies. Only half of children are breastfed with the other half failing to receive the needed nutritional requirements through the complementary feeding program. The Government is using a multidimensional approach to address this by providing pregnant mothers and children with the need supplements to cover the micronutrient deficiencies and by raising awareness on child/women nutrition, food value and food diversity (page 17).

Progress in health outcomes were also identified. The report notes "the neonatal mortality rate (NMR) also reduced from 81/1,000 (1981) to 20 (2015). Expanded programme on immunization (EPI) coverage evaluation survey 2015 reveals that **82.5% children were fully vaccinated**. Deliveries attended by skilled health personnel (SHPs) increased from 5% (1991) to 42% (2014). Proportion of birth in health facilities by wealth quintile from 4.4:43.4 in 2007 to 15.0:69.5 in 2014 (BDHS) indicates a sharp reduction in inequity in Bangladesh" (page 19). Development of a countrywide network of healthcare infrastructure including community clinics (CCs) are improving health outcomes and helping reach rural and remote populations. **"Currently, 13,136 CCs are functioning with adequate health workers and medicines. Among these 1,008 CCs are providing delivery facilities. On an average 40 patients/day attend each CC, 95% of whom are women and children"** (page 20).

In terms of gender equality, Bangladesh noted their progress towards ending child marriage with the adoption of the ***Child Marriage Restraint Act passed in 2017*** and the Prime Minister committed at the UK Girls Summit to end child marriage under 15 by 2021 and to end marriage under 18 by 2041. The law has put a lot of emphasis on community responsibility, as well as that of local level public officials to actively prevent child marriages (page 26). The Government has also drafted a *National Plan of Action* on Ending Marriage. The Government adopted the *National Women Development Policy (NWDP) in 2011* that aims at eliminating all forms of discrimination against women and creating favourable environment for them to access to economy, education and health. A separate act to prevent violence against women and children is already in place (*Nari O Shishu Nirjaton Domon Ain, 2000*) (page 26).

See full report: [Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world: Voluntary National Review \(VNR\) 2017 Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh](#)



BELARUS

The President of the Republic of Belarus has established a National Coordinator on the achievement of the SDGs under his leadership of the National Council for Sustainable Development. A key challenge for the country is on SDG-related data. Full information is available only for 38% of indicators. For 22% there is partial information and almost 40% the data and methodology of calculation are not available. State administrations under the leadership of the Belarusian Statistical Committee have started work on compiling a list of national indicators, on the basis of which a national system of SDG indicators and monitoring will be established.

The approach to the SDGs implementation will be organized around the following pillars: 1) ensuring sustainable economic growth through investment and innovation; 2) investing in human development and strengthening social support for vulnerable groups; 2) ensuring gender equality and an active youth policy; and 4) maintaining environmental sustainability.

Belarus' report did not give youth an explicit way to participate in the VNR process but mentioned an **"active youth policy"** as one of the priorities of Belarussian development. Belarussian youth are very active through several federal youth groups including the *National Youth Union*, especially given 1/5 of work people in the country are aged 16-26.

Belarus has succeeded in keeping **infant and child mortality rates low, 3.2 per 100,000 and 4.1 per 1,000 respectively. 93.6% of Belarussian children go to preschool and 97.9% have access to an education.** The Government is promoting gender equality among secondary school students through a process of joint trainings.

The Government also reported that it has **worked with UNICEF on HIV prevention programmes and sees the UN system including UNICEF as important in the formation of multilateral partnerships to mobilize and share knowledge, experiences, technologies and financial resources to support the achievement of the SDGs.**

See full report: [National Report of the Republic of Belarus on the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#)



BELGIUM

Belgium issued a **particularly strong VNR that addresses child rights and a wide range of children's and young people's issues including child poverty, early education, protection and civic participation.** The report was coordinated by a political steering committee chaired by the Prime Minister, and with the active involvement of representatives from the various federal and federated entities.

The country committed to **developing a second national plan to combat child poverty** and will continue its efforts to strengthen the national child protection system to **address all forms of violence against girls and boys and to prevent social exclusion.** The country also highlighted the need for better data for children: "upon the recommendation of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the

Child, the **Belgian National Commission on the Rights of the Child has developed 40 national indicators...to provide a better understanding of the extent to which children’s rights are increasingly being realized from the point of view of the child itself.**”

The report notes the "importance of inclusive participation, accessible services, energy poverty and the prevention and combating of poverty in families with young children." It also references "a separate government **policy on children’s and youth rights [that] strives for equal opportunities, chances and space to develop and increased formal and informal engagement for all children and young people** (page 8).”

Belgium highlighted their **use and promotion of the [Children’s Rights and Business Principles](#)** and that the Government "has adopted a National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights with special attention to children’s rights and engages and participates in the annual Geneva Forum on Business and Human Rights (page 35)." Belgium established and supports a dedicated *Children’s Rights and Business Principles (CRBD) Commission*, composed of several representatives from the corporate world and civil society in stimulating companies to implement the 10 principles in their corporate strategy and to take local action to improve children’s rights (page 60).

“Belgium is also committed to developing a second national plan to combat child poverty and will continue its efforts to strengthen the national child protection system to address all forms of violence against girls and boys and to prevent social exclusion (page 60).”

Upon the recommendation of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, the Belgian National Commission on the Rights of the Child has developed 40 national indicators since 2013. The aim is to provide a better understanding of the extent to which children’s rights are increasingly being realized from the point of view of the child itself. While highlighting vulnerable groups is one of the cornerstones of indicator development work, one of the main findings has been that some of these groups are left out in the data collection, either because they are not captured by existing surveys, or because no survey investigates their specific situations. To overcome this lack of data, two specific surveys are being carried out by the Commission concerning children and migration and children in public institutions.

Belgium specifically recognized in their report that they are a **member of the *Group of Friends of Children and SDGs (where UNICEF serves as the Secretariat) and the Group of Friends of Children and Armed Conflict.*** Other initiatives, specifically directed to involving young persons in reflections on citizenship and global challenges such as climate change or sustainable development, abound. They include youth parliaments, associations of “young change makers,” training programs and platforms connecting government, civil society and youth in the endeavor to build a sustainable, solidary and participatory society (page 21).

Belgium established a government policy on children’s and youth rights for increased formal and informal engagement for all children and young people. The Belgium report states: **“Young people are natural and special custodians of a 15 year Agenda aiming to transform our world. Aware of the challenges of the future and well-placed to help shape the changes needed, they take countless initiatives for a more sustainable world. The Belgian youth councils act as a bridge between youth and the authorities, informing young people about the challenges and opportunities connected with this Agenda and reminding governments about the importance of ensuring intergenerational solidarity. They have already put a considerable amount of effort in**

aligning their initiatives to the SDGs, including through actions to reduce inequalities within and outside the educational system (SDGs 4 and 10), to 'green' universities (SDGs 12, 13, 14 and 15), to combat food waste (SDGs 2 and 12) and stimulate recycling practices (SDGs 12 and 13), to focus on urban ownership (SDG 10) and mutual help in the job search and in creating start-ups (SDG 8)" (Page 70).

See Full Report: [Pathways to Sustainable Development: First Belgian National Voluntary Review on the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda](#)



BELIZE

The greatest strength of the *Belize Voluntary National Review* was the report's clear linkage of the SDGs to national plans, budgets and implementation efforts. The VNR referenced the national development plan, *Horizon 2030* as well as the adoption of the *Growth and Sustainable Development Strategy (GSDS) 2016-2020* for specifically guiding SDG implementation. A limitation of the VNR, however, was its focus on only four of the six SDGs under review this year: Poverty, Health, Gender Equality and Oceans (1, 3, 5, 14), therefore excluding Hunger and Infrastructure. Overall the report was very data based, although with heavy reliance on 2013 and 2014 statistics as opposed to more recent figures.

In the poverty, health and gender sections of the report, there was a solid use of data and referencing of policies highlighting the realities and experiences of children and young people. For example, the section under the Poverty Goal (SDG 1) analyzed that "the implication from this is that **children are more prone to poverty** as was confirmed by a child poverty rate of 50% which is higher than the overall average of 42% and for any other age group." The report then named specific social protection programmes aiming to solve this, citing a **UNICEF commissioned review and recommendations report that covered over 48 social protection programs**. The Health Goal (SDG 3) section focused on child health improvements including the delivery of health care and related services such as Baby Friendly Hospitals, Exclusive Breastfeeding Rate Up to 6 months of Age increasing from 10% to 33%, growth in vaccination coverage and the effective implementation of the Integrated Management of Childhood Illnesses (IMCI).

Interestingly, the VNR adopted text from the HLPF Ministerial Declaration that UNICEF drafted and advocated for. The report stated, "There have been several responses aimed at eliminating gender-based violence in Belize **and children, adolescents and youth are recognized as important agents of change which underlines the necessity of investing in them and protecting them from violence and coercion with a view to addressing multidimensional deprivations, ending intergenerational poverty, harnessing the demographic dividend and empowering them to build a more prosperous future.**" This demonstrates that the processes in negotiating the ministerial declaration can also influence national statements and reports.

In addition, the VNR made note of the consultative process of *Horizon 2030*, which specifically involved the **participation of youth groups**. It was also stated that the CRC, in addition to other major international conventions, is currently used to guide the work of key ministries and national agencies.

See full report: [Belize's Voluntary National Review for the Sustainable Development Goals 2017: Eradicating Poverty and Promoting Prosperity in a Changing Role](#)



BENIN

Benin has initiated a road map for SDG implementation, developed in a participatory manner and bringing together government agencies, municipal councilors, local elected officials, parliamentarians, civil society, the media and the private sector. The Government also noted that over 50 meetings reaching nearly 5000 participants were conducted as part of the VNR process, which also **involved young people through the Youth Advisory Body and the young international chamber of Benin** (page 4). Benin specifically mentioned efforts to raise awareness on the SDGs through education and other communication channels. Particular emphasis was placed on the Goals receiving in-depth review at the HLPF in 2017: Goal 1 (No poverty); Goal 2 (Zero Hunger); Goal 3 (Good Health and Well-being); Goal 5 (Gender Equality); Goal 9 (Innovation and Infrastructure) and Goal 14 (Life under water). They also reported on consulting with students and youth organizations as part of the process.

The Government of Benin has identified a subset of **49 of the SDG targets that are particular priorities for the country. They include a number that are child focused including those targets relating to child poverty, nutrition, child mortality, education and protecting children from violence, exploitation and abuse.** Cross-cutting priorities were also mentioned, including equality, childhood, social capital, human capital, standard of living, water and energy, economic diversification, sustainable management of land, climate change, gender and good governance all levels (vii). Although there were no references to the issue of FGM in the report, this practice has declined in Benin. According MICS 2014 survey data less than 1% of girls aged 0-14 has undergone FGM.

Poverty remains a significant issue in Benin, with 40.1% of the population living in poverty as of 2015. Furthermore, the Government has noted that only 8.4% of the population is covered by health insurance. To remedy this, the Government has launched the *Assurance for the Strengthening of Human Capital (ARCH)* to increase social protection for the population. This is intended to boost health coverage, create better living conditions for the most vulnerable and address issues of food security and malnutrition.

The Government is reporting that **34% of children in Benin are experiencing chronic malnutrition, and that rates of under 5 mortality are unacceptably high**, noting that there are significant gaps between the richest and poorest families. Family planning and the need to reduce fertility rates were also highlighted as national priorities. The Government reports that 19.4% of adolescents have had at least one live birth, according to a national MICS survey in 2014 (page 12). The Government also noted the link between education and other SDGs, particularly that boosting secondary enrolment and completion rates for girls is key to making progress on issues of nutrition and child survival (page 13).

See Full Report: [Contribution Nationale Volontaire a La Mise en Oeuvre Des ODD Au Forum Politique de Haut Niveau](#)



BOTSWANA

The [Botswana Voluntary National Review](#) overall included strong details on key SDG implementation interventions and policies. While the report was also data and results driven, statistics were largely outdated in key sections, relying on 2007 or 2010 stats.

Botswana underwent a lengthy consultation process in the development of the country's national *Vision 2036* and national development plan to ensure they were aligned to the SDGs, forming the National Steering Committee (NSC) to drive the SDG agenda, developing a roadmap for the country. **The NSC membership includes government, private sector, development partners, youth groups, CSOs and other non-state actors.** The VNR was prepared with the full participation of government, private sector, civil society, local authorities, development partners, UN, academia and other interest groups. Data was collected through workshops, focus group discussions, key interviews and literature reviews. While the report stated that "all the UN agencies resident in Botswana provided many reports in the drafting stages and gave extensive inputs as the report was developed," UNICEF was not specifically acknowledged despite the fact that the following UN entities were: UN Resident Coordinator's Office; United Nations Development Programme; United Nations Population Fund; UN Women; UNAIDS; World Health Organization.

References to children were scarce. The **majority of child-related statistics and policies were made under the Hunger (SDG 2) and Health Goals (SDG 3)**, citing improvements made in stunting and mother to child HIV transmissions. The nutrition section made mention of the **importance of eradicating stunting in the first 1000 days of life** causing irreversible damage and leading to intergenerational poverty. "It is in that regard that adequate and good quality of food and nutrition is one major way through which poverty can be alleviated." The report states that it is notable, however "that available data goes up to 2007...it is possible that a lot could have happened during the last ten years to change the overall picture in this figure."

Alternatively, **youth were viewed as a key constituency in the national consultation and implementation efforts.** Botswana implemented several awareness campaigns, held in all 16 districts. It was reported that "the youth have also engaged in the whole SDG domestication process. The **Youth Alliance for Leadership and Development in Africa (YALDA) partnered with a mobile phone company (African Monitor and Orange Botswana) to solicit inputs from thousands of young Botswanan to find out their hopes and aspirations for Botswana and Africa beyond 2015.** The output informed the Africa Common Position on the 2030 Agenda." YALDA also translated the SDGs into local languages and conducted community events on SDG champions. One of the listed social protection interventions listed was the Youth Empowerment Scheme (YES) which gives young people a starter support package of grants to start economically viable projects. There is also the Youth Development Fund.

See full report: [Botswana Voluntary National Review on Sustainable Development Goals 2017](#)



BRAZIL

The focus of *Brazil's Voluntary National Review* was on nationally institutionalizing the SDGs. The report specifically concluded, "The nature of the 2030 Agenda is global; however, its purpose and targets are directly in line with national, regional and local policies and actions. It is an essential step for the successful achievement of the 2030 Agenda to take into account subnational contexts in the implementation of the Sustainable Development

Goals...Internalization and localization are, therefore, central challenges for the applicability of the SDGs in the Brazilian territory."

Localization efforts took place through several entities including national coordination bodies, national indicators and national communication efforts:

- The government established the **National Commission for the Sustainable Development Goals**, composed of 16 representatives from all levels of government and civil society, responsible for conducting the process of integration, engagement and dialogue, aiming to internalize, disseminate and confer transparency to the 2030 Agenda.
- The national congress created the **Joint Parliamentary Front to Support the UN Sustainable Development Goals** which brings together more than 200 house representatives and senators, equivalent to a third of the parliamentarians, and was structured to address SDG demands.
- The external control institution, the **Brazil Federal Court of Accounts**, conducted the SDGs Project to audit and assess the government's preparedness for SDG implementation, informing public policy response.
- The **Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics** has initiated the discussion on defining national SDG indicators. An assessment of Brazil's databases has been conducted on the availability of data, calculation methodology and information sources.
- National **digital participation platforms** such as DialogaBrasil, the Participa.br Portal, and [Estrategia ODS](#) have encouraged public consultation and enabled dialogue between citizens and government.

At the subnational level, the following city-training and awareness efforts took place:

- The **National Confederation of Municipalities** developed a guide of incorporation and held regional seminars for municipal managers, providing training and raising awareness regarding the incorporation of the 2030 Agenda into their administration. Some states, therefore, have already included several SDG targets in their **Multi-Year Plans**.
- Cities also implemented SDG dissemination efforts. For instance, Rio de Janeiro developed the **Award for Partners of the Sustainable Development Goals**, aimed at conferring recognition to the work of institutions and individuals contributing to the fulfillment of the SDGs.

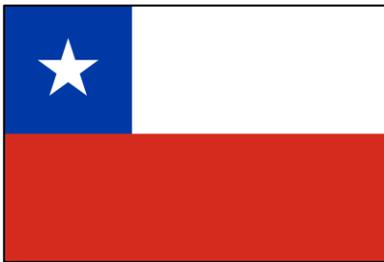
Awareness, participatory methods and consultations were key themes of the report with heavy emphasis on the important role of civil society in SDG implementation. Stating that civil society uses participatory planning to implement projects, the report tasks Brazilian civil society organizations with implementing a long list of the social dimension of the SDGs, including "**the rights of children and adolescents, youth**" and specifically naming "**violence against children and adolescents, child labor, child marriage and inequalities.**" The report also names **Ciranda 2030**, focusing on the SDG targets with direct impacts on the lives of children and adolescents, as part

of a long list of coalitions of networks created for specific SDG audiences and issues. The report notes that private companies have carried out lectures and events for mobilization, awareness-raising, and alignment of corporate social responsibility actions with the goals. These national-wide efforts are being documented through an online submission system collected by the Government.

The strongest and most specific reference to children was the report's feature on **Early Childhood Development**, describing the new *Happy Child Program* which seeks to promote ECD and "stop the vicious cycle in which malnutrition and poverty affect early childhood and jeopardize the future of generations, limiting the opportunities of a large share of the population." So far 2, 547 municipalities have joined the Program which aims to reach 4 million children by the end of 2018.

Overall, the report was strong in terms of detailed plans, policies and data but weak in terms of referencing children, adolescents and youth in detail. However, notably under the specific SDG sections, many policies focused on **families** including those addressing social protection for families, family's access to food, family farming, family health plans, and family protection against land degradation.

See full report: [Voluntary National Review on the Sustainable Development Goals: Brazil 2017](#)



CHILE

The *Chile Voluntary National Review* was strong in reaffirming its commitment to Agenda 2030, explaining its methodology and process for preparing the report and how the goals have been incorporated nationally.

While it was unclear whether or not there is an existing National Development Plan, a Government network for the SDGs has been developed, including committees and working groups composed of public and private stakeholders including the UN system. The National Council for the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (composed of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Economic Affairs, Business Development and Tourism, the Ministry of Social Development and the Ministry of the Environment) has made progress in developing and disseminating a national mapping of public policies and private initiatives that contribute to SDG implementation, also addressing gaps and challenges. The council also conducted a mapping of the global and national indicators, which is annexed in the VNR, of which the Technical Secretariat of the Council and the National Institute of Statistics (INE) has adapted.

Other notable initiatives include **awareness-raising workshops, national and regional consultations hosted by the Government. The "Dialogues for a Sustainable Chile" were organized by civil society which focus on making sure "no one is left behind" thus involving indigenous communities; children and adolescents; women in situations of vulnerability; people with disabilities; immigrants; among others.** Not only did the VNR mention that these dialogues took place, but the report provided details such as date, time, theme and participants of each dialogue, numbering over 30 conversations, dialogues, seminars or workshops. For instance, on 16 June 2017, in Santiago, the **Children's Forum for the Sustainable Development Goals** was co-organized for adolescents from 14 to 17 years old by a number of child-focused CSOs with the help of UNICEF. Mr. Marcos Barraza, Minister of Social Development, was the speaker.

More broadly, in order to include children and adolescents, the National Council for Children, Ministries of Education and Social Development, with technical assistance from UNDP and UNICEF, prompted a broad deliberative process of the population of children and adolescents through *the Yo Opino, es mi derecho* (I give my opinion, it's my right) campaign, which plans to enable hundreds of thousands of children in Chile to learn of the SDGs, deliberate about their priorities and propose actions to move towards their achievement. In order to support children working on these complex issues, the report notes that the simplification of language and content is required without meaning to trivialize the problem. To this point, the report uses UNICEF messaging: **"The idea is not that children memorize the 17 Objectives, nor that they have a technical definition of each SDG; rather that they achieve relevant knowledge that relates the goals to their daily lives and can inspire actions to be fulfilled by them."** The report states that child consultations both adhered to the CRC and served as the Government's response to the Human Rights Commission of the General Assembly in February of this year when he argued that children are entitled to be considered in the discussion of the agenda 2030.

The VNR addresses the situation of children in the poverty, hunger and health sections. Throughout the report, Chile stated the need for comprehensive measures of protection, capacity building and respect for rights, especially in a cross-cutting manner, to more vulnerable groups including children. **Challenges remain in Chile for children living in multidimensional poverty, with malnutrition and with lack of health or care.** While income poverty has decreased to 11.7 per cent of the population, 20.9 per cent of the population experiences **multidimensional poverty**. In the case of malnutrition for children under 5, it affects 10.6% of boys and girls. In the Health dimension, 4.9% of households had at least one child with malnutrition, 6.1% of households had a lack of health and 5.1% had a lack of health care.

Measures to address this include a legislative package aiming to strengthen existing institutions such as the System of Guarantees of the Rights of the Child which offers comprehensive protection of the rights of children and girls as a fundamental basis for overcoming inequality. Other institutions are being strengthened such as the Undersecretary of Childhood; and the Ombudsman for Children, as well as legislation to protect the rights of juvenile offenders.

See full report: [Chile Agenda 2030 Informe Nacional Voluntario](#)



COSTA RICA

On 9 September 2016, Costa Rica became the first country to sign a "national pact" for the SDGs. Costa Rica's comprehensive *Voluntary National Review* outlines the integrated and multidimensional approach to adapt national frameworks and establish a governance structure for SDG implementation.

The inclusion of traditionally excluded populations is evident throughout the review, though children were not listed as part of these consultations. Since the adoption of the Agenda, Costa Rica has established governance structures, set up indicator baselines and monitoring, and began work on their priority areas of the SDGs.

The first stage in developing and signing the *National Pact for the Advancement of the SDGs*, was conducting consultations with a focus on excluded and vulnerable groups (although children and youth were not included). This process resulted in seven priority themes for the country and 39 measurements for these themes which were inequality; universal access to education; employment generation; access to justice; environmental

sustainability; and democratic government. It was this process that set the tone and the strategy for Costa Rica's SDG priorities.

An Executive Decree called for the establishment of an organizational structure to plan, implement and guide SDG adoption in the country in February of 2017. The policy coordination, decision-making, and progress monitoring will be in the hands of a committee titled *Consejo de Alto Nivel de los ODS* (High-level Advice for the SDGs). This body is to be supported by a *Secretaría Técnica de los ODS* (Technical Secretariat of the SDGs), which has the mandate of ensuring participation and monitoring advances and gaps in achievement. On the note of monitoring, Costa Rica has charged the *Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censo* (the National Institute of Statistics and Census) with the collection of data for the indicators of the SDGs.

While children are referenced where relevant in the review of SDG progress, the inclusion of children's participation and activities is not a focus. UNICEF is however listed as a partner and participant of the national dialogues on poverty.

Costa Rica's review is strong in its comprehensive information on the state of the SDGs. With respect to references to children under the poverty goal, **children are included in the 2015 Multidimensional Poverty Index in the dimensions of Social Protection and Education**. Boys, girls, and adolescents are reported to be a vulnerable group that disproportionately experiences inequality. In response, the Patronato Nacional de la Infancia (National Board of Childhood) and UNICEF support children to "reach the necessary conditions for the maximum wellbeing, development and social inclusion."

Both the Zero Hunger goal (SDG 2) and the goal on Health and Well-being (SDG 3) pointed to the current issue of childhood obesity and the strategies to incentivize healthy lives, including the *Plan of Approach to Overweight and Obesity in Youth and Adolescence 2017-2021*. Other initiatives focus on the prevention of tobacco and drug addiction in youth and adolescence. The final relevant thematic area discussed was gender equality (SDG 5), which highlighted the revitalization of municipal capacities for childcare. One such initiative, *Casas de Alegría*, ensures childcare for indigenous children while parents are harvesting coffee.

See full report: [Costa Rica: Construyendo una visión compartida del desarrollo sostenible: Reporte Nacional Voluntario de los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible](#)



CYPRUS

The *Cyprus Voluntary National Review* was informed by a mapping conducted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. While no longer-term sustainable development strategy has been formulated at present, the mapping "indicates that a combination of policies and legislation cover most of the SDGs in Cyprus."

Due to the recent economic crisis and current institutional restructuring of ministries, the greatest institutional challenge is the lack of an SDG implementation coordination body. Therefore, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with support from the Department of Development Cooperation in preparing the VNR, has continued to coordinate the SDG localization processes and has initiated a process for indicating the most logical body for

domestic policy coordination. Most ministries supported the assignment of localizing Agenda 2030 at the domestic level and the forming of a national strategy.

Despite institutional limitations, the VNR still resulted in a strong analysis of the alignment between the SDGs and the policies, plans and priorities of Cyprus. Included in the VNR were sections outlining government capacity issues, a detailed section on 16 out of the 17 SDGs, an annexed set of available data under each SDG and an annexed report on civil society engagement with the SDGs. However the report also came to a potentially overconfident conclusion that “The results indicate that some of the goals are completely achieved, some others partially achieved, while government planning is in place for almost all the goals and targets.”

Thematically, **the topic of youth was reported to be a major focus of both Cyprus’s governmental implementation of the SDGs and its interaction with civil society.** In setting general priorities in the implementation of the SDGs, the Government chose Youth as one of them. *The National Youth Strategy (NYS) of Cyprus* for the period 2017-2022 defines, for the first time, the vision of the state for its young people. It is the Government’s commitment to implement actions that guarantee quality of life and offer new opportunities for all the young people in Cyprus. It aspires to ensure the active participation of all young people in society and to explore ways that empower them to realize their full potential as citizens. In order to do so, the NYS establishes an integrated, cross-sectoral mechanism for designing, implementing and monitoring all policy areas that are inter-related and directly affect young people, as well as a participatory approach, with the involvement of youth in policy formulation. Thus, it ensures that there is a medium and long-term plan for improving the situation of young people, with a set of defined objectives and corresponding measures under eight main fields of action. These fields of action which derive from the European Youth Strategy, are: Education and Training, Employment and Entrepreneurship, Health and Wellbeing, Participation, Volunteerism, Social Inclusion, Youth and the World, Creativity and Culture.”

Linked to the topic of youth, the Government reported close cooperation between Government and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in SDG implemented activities. Efforts specifically focused on creating citizens’ awareness for global issues and encouraging global citizenship of Cyprus youth. In 2015, all cities took part in events including lectures, films, art exhibitions, youth competitions etc. CSOs have continued to have an active role in implementing a host of awareness and –mainly- education activities related either directly or indirectly to the SDGs. Yet more needs to be done on linking most of CSO activities with the SDGs.

In the report’s analysis of each SDG (aside from SDG 10: Reducing Inequalities), children’s issues were addressed, particularly strongly under the child poverty, education and peace and justice goals (SDG 1, 4, 16). There was a **dedicated section on the *National Strategy for the Rights of the Child 2016-2019*** which focused on protecting children against violence.

The report acknowledged of UN role including WFP, FAO, UNIDO, UNDP, UNHCR etc. UNICEF does not have a presence in Cyprus.

See full report: [Republic of Cyprus: Review of the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda in Cyprus](#)



CZECH REPUBLIC

The *Czech Republic Voluntary National Review* introduced its new national strategic framework for sustainable development, *Czech Republic 2030*, adopted in April 2017 and setting forth 97 goals for the country's national SDG implementation. The strategy was informed by a two year process, coordinated by the Government Council on Sustainable Development (GCSD), chaired by the Prime Minister. The VNR process involved all the ministries and over three hundred institutions and organizations.

Analysis within the VNR demonstrates that all the SDGs and most of the targets of the 2030 Agenda are applicable to Czech Republic at the national level. The classification of results is based on the OECD Study [Measuring Distance to SDGs Targets \(2017\)](#) and defines six key sections.

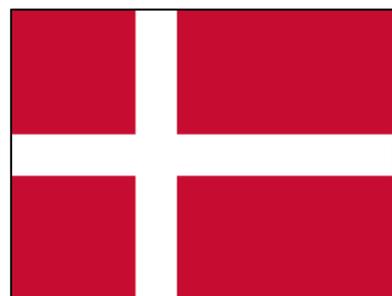
Youth were not mentioned once and children were mentioned a mere three times as a vulnerable group. The universal system of social protection was touted as successful in operationalizing the principle of “leave no one behind” but was it was also demanded that it should better reach the most vulnerable groups. Strengthening cooperation with civil society, local governments and communities while delivering social services was therefore suggested. The report claimed the traditional family model has been weakening in recent years and thus may be disrupting its historical tradition of policies favourable to families with children.

Positively, **participation of a wide range of stakeholders was a key theme** of the report, encouraging national participation and ownership of SDG implementation efforts. This was also deemed critical to raising awareness of the SDGs and assisting in the monitoring of efforts made. The enabling environment was described to encourage citizens' participation in policy-making and participatory budgeting processes and building partnerships with all the relevant stakeholders.

In order to raise awareness about the SDGs and award national projects which contribute to their implementation, a contest entitled *The Czech SDG Awards* was organized in 2017. In total 215 projects entered the competition this year.

Overall the VRN was well organized in assessing current strengths and weaknesses, although reliance on data was an acknowledged limitation and references to children were scarce.

See full report: [National Report on the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: Czech Republic](#)



DENMARK

The *Denmark Voluntary National Review* begins with the Minister of Finance penning that “We must ensure that our children inherit a world and planet in balance.”

Globally, Denmark established its' global development policy with a focus on five SDGs: gender equality (SDG 5), sustainable energy (SDG 7), climate (SDG 13), peace, justice and institutions (SDG 16) and partnerships (SDG 17). Young people were also identified as a

key priority in the government's global development engagement: **"Our aim is the development of and development *with* young people, not merely *for* young people."**

Regionally, Denmark cited its work to ensure that the EU and its member states integrate the SDGs in new regional policies and initiatives including the [European Consensus on Development](#) and the [Council Conclusions on a Sustainable European Future](#).

Nationally, the Ministry of Finance and the inter-ministerial SDG working group is responsible for coordinating the national implementation of the SDGs, per the national action plan. The national action plan contains 37 concrete (mostly) national targets with 1-2 indicators under all SDGs. A few targets are focused on implementation in other countries. The Action Plan **commits to conduct two further Voluntary National Reviews before 2030 and will nationally will publish annual progress reports** presented to parliament. It is noted that at present, Denmark does not have data on all global indicators.

The Government is also preparing to launch an SDG Fund in 2018 which will be a public-private partnership between the Danish Government and institutional investors. The Government expects to contribute around 450 million USD to the SDG fund, which will be matched by an equal contribution from institutional investors. Raising awareness and creating ownership of the SDGs through consultation and engagement with multi-stakeholders was a key theme of the report. Notably, the report mentioned that in the education sector, primary and secondary schools have taken initiatives to integrate learning about the SDGs, global development and sustainability into the curriculum and to work with children and young people to develop solutions to the SDGs. **Since 2015, the Danish version of the World's Largest Lesson, "Verdenstimen", has spread to primary and secondary schools with a growing interest among school teachers and students.** The youth section of the report further stated that the 2030 Agenda has been integrated into the curricula at a number of high schools and higher educational institutions. According to a poll carried out by Wilke for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 16 per cent of young people aged 18–34 are aware of the SDGs. These references to children learning about the SDGs is a welcome follow-up to Denmark's active participation in the Group of Friends of Children meeting on January 2017 at UNICEF HQ in NY on the topic of children's awareness and action on the SDGs through the World's Largest Lesson. The Permanent Representative of Denmark agreed at that meeting with the importance to teach sustainable development and pledged to include the voices of children and youth at the HLPF. Interestingly, the Danish VNR *annexed reports from different stakeholders including civil society, business, academia and the Danish Youth Council (DUF)*. The youth report clarifies that including and empowering vulnerable and marginalised young people is a crucial challenge for the country. Amidst a number of key opportunities to engage young people, the youth report also identified some troubling national trends such as declining trust among young voters and politicians, declining faith in democracy, declining political interest and declining youth voting.

While the report was strong in terms of *youth* participation, there is room for ensuring that *children* are not left behind in being consulted and engaged in SDG implementation efforts.

See full report: [Report for the Voluntary National Review: Denmark's implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#)



EL SALVADOR

The *El Salvador's Voluntary National Review* outlines the linkages between the *National Plan for Development* and the Agenda 2030 and the incorporation of the SDGs into the national framework and institutions. El Salvador developed the *Agenda Nacional of Sustainable Development for 2015-2019* and established a National Advisory group for Sustainable

Development.

In the MDG era, El Salvador was one of the Latin American Countries that had the biggest improvements in its Human Development Index. The country also achieved improvements in extreme poverty and infant and maternal mortality. Taking the experience of the MDGs into account, along with national and local conversations on the SDGs, the Government of El Salvador defined nine focus areas for SDG implementation. The priority themes are: decent work and social protection; housing and access to basic water and sanitation services; environment and adaption to climate; food and nutrition security; education and value-forming; preventative and curative health services; citizen security and prevention of violence; connectivity and accessibility; and migration.

El Salvador reports it has advanced substantially in the definition of indicators and targets for the SDGs. El Salvador has adopted 52.28% of the suggested indicators. In addition to the nine focus areas that El Salvador has selected, they have included 29 targets from the remaining, non-priority goals.

El Salvador gives a comprehensive review of progress to-date on the relevant and priority SDGs. Mentions of children in the report occur in its analysis of the state of SDGs. **Child specific data is referenced in the progress updates on SDG 2 (end to hunger), SDG 3 (Health and wellbeing), SDG 4 (Education), and SDG 5 (gender equality). Under the Hunger goal (SDG 2), children's food and nutrition security is highlighted.** Additional national targets that specifically prioritize children are SDG 11 and 16. Children are included under the targets for SDG 11 in considerations for access to safe and accessible transportation systems and in SDG 16 which has a target dedicated to putting an end to the mistreatment, exploitation and violence against children. The report also includes a list of programmatic initiatives, many of which relate specifically to children. The review also includes an example of a child-specific initiative on hunger, *Vaso de Leche*, which promotes the physical health of children and cares for their nutrition.

See full report: [Revision Nacional Voluntaria de la Implementacion de la Agenda 2030 Para El Desarrollo Sostenible En El Salvador](#)



ETHIOPIA

As part of the VNR Process, the Government of Ethiopia took a three pronged approach: 1) Review of existing government laws and development policies and plans; 2) Organizing and analyzing statistical data and/or information collected from official sources; and 3) Conducting inclusive national

consultations (federal and regional levels) on the draft 2017 VNR.

On item 3, the Government reports that a number of consultations were held as part of their VNR process at federal, regional and city levels, including with government, the private sector, civil society and non-government organizations, professional associations, women, persons with disabilities, youth associations, farmers and pastoralists, the parliament, political parties and other development partners.

Ethiopia has integrated the SDGs with in its [Second Five Year Growth and Transformation Plan \(GTP II\)](#) spanning the period 2015/16-2019/20 and notes that implementing GTP II and its successors means implementing the SDGs. There is and will be one national development plan in which the SDGs are mainstreamed.

Ethiopia's VNR dedicates chapter 7.2.2 to the issue of *children's rights and welfare*. They have noted that children's affairs is a cross-sectoral issue and deserving of special attention. The report also indicates the progress on child rights in the 18 months of work on implementing the SDGs including: a draft policy for children's rights and welfare a federal level database; and the establishment of child-friendly courts (page 15).

Nearly 22,000 government sector officials have completed awareness seminars on "children's rights and welfare; illegal facilitation of the migration of children; labor exploitation; gender related offences and on the proper raising of children" (page 15). Over 461,000 members of the public have also been given orientations on harmful practices and the exploitation of children through child labor practices.

Ethiopia has also **established a *Children's Parliament*, whereby the primary objective is "to enable children to have their voices heard so that they can safeguard themselves and other children from environmental and family oppressions, to enable them raise petitions in an organized way on matters concerning them [and] to have discussions and advance their joint positions"** (page 16). There are over 8400 members of the children's parliament, of which over 4400 are girls.

Ethiopia acknowledged some progress in overall child health in their VNR, but noted there have been some recent upticks in the rate of under-5 mortality and wasting of children under 5 and where corrective measures should be taken (page 27).

See full report: [The 2017 Voluntary National Review on SDGs of Ethiopia: Government Commitments, National Ownership and Performance Trends](#)



GUATEMALA

The *Guatemala Voluntary National Review* was one of the more detailed VNRs at 277 pages. The report explained that the National Development Plan, *Plan Nacional de Desarrollo K'atun: Nuestra Guatemala 2032*, prioritized 17 goals, 129 targets and 200 indicators, which is the vast majority of the global set. The VNR, according to Guatemala, served as a self-assessment for which

areas the country should focus its efforts. The VNR also describes the details of the consultations carried out during the prioritization process. Overall, **26 workshops were implemented, 4 of which were arranged to target children, youth, women and indigenous peoples.**

In the poverty section, the VNR mentions that social protection systems specifically support vulnerable children and youth. The **disaggregated indicator on the proportion of those living in poverty reveals that the**

indigenous population, people in rural areas and young people 15 years old and younger are living in the highest levels of poverty.

Hunger also continues to be a challenge for the country, referencing a reduction of stunting since 1995 by 9 percentage points but still resulting in a prevalence of 46.5% of children. Malnutrition is also declining although is currently still a significant issue plaguing 18.4% of children. The situation is worse when disaggregated by indigenous populations and rural areas where the gap widens to a prevalence of 26.7% of malnourished children. Similarly under the health goal, the child mortality rate dropped drastically since 1987 from 109 per 1000 live births to an average of 35 per 1000. But disparities remain large for rural and indigenous children compared to urban areas.

The **Guatemala VNR positively included the perception data project using U-Report which was coordinated by UNICEF including the Guatemala Country Office, the Innovation Division and the Agenda 2030 Unit.** This was the first pilot project in which UNICEF advocated for governments to include perception data of young people on the SDGs under review in order to complement national statistics. Guatemala was one of the few countries that prominently featured the results of the polls in its VNR. In Guatemala, U-Report was officially launched on September 28, 2016. To date, there are 2,345 U-Reporters; 74% of them are adolescents and young people under 25 years. The general poll revealed that 28% of the respondents know what the SDGs are while 72% had never heard of them. **Youth priority concerns are poverty (22%), corruption and justice (21%), education (20%) and employment (15%).** A snapshot of specific findings from the polls include:

- Almost all U-reporters (94%) reported that there are people living in poverty in their communities.
- More than half (64%) of the users responded that families in their communities have gone without food. 75% of users believe that their community does not have balanced food.
- An overwhelming 79% of U-reporters indicated awareness of girls or adolescents who were married before the age of 18 despite the fact that the civil code as of 2015 establishes that the minimum age for marriage is 18.
- 67% of women and 51% of men report that women are treated different than men

The hope and aspiration is for Guatemala to serve as an example country to others in promoting the use of perception data in their SDG monitoring efforts and VNR findings. UNICEF is working on a summary report of the project. At the global level, Guatemala co-hosted a UNICEF HLPF side event, entitled [Perception Data as a Metric of Well-Being](#), showcasing the results of these pilots that used quantitative and qualitative methodologies to collect perception data on the SDGs in order to assist decision-makers in SDG review activities. The event was also co-sponsored by the Government of Zimbabwe, UNICEF, World Food Programme (WFP), SDG Action Campaign, and the Institute of Development Studies (IDS). The event attracted about 100 participants.

See full report: [Agenda 2030 para el desarrollo sostenible Examen nacional voluntario, 2017: Guatemala](#)



HONDURAS

Honduras' Voluntary National Review focused on the country's progress in establishing the basis that will lead to effective SDG implementation.

Accordingly, the bulk of the review focuses on the steps taken to institutionalize and govern the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. **Children**

are directly referenced in the review in two main areas— efforts toward SDG 4 (inclusive and quality education) and through UNICEF’s Early Childhood Development initiative.

Honduras’ National Review does not incorporate progress related to the goals and indicators of the SDGs. The Ministry for General Government Coordination (SCGG) that has been appointed by the President to oversee the Agenda 2030 implementation writes that this is because their efforts to date have focused on the definition of the national agenda in relation to the SDGs, the socialization of the agenda, and the creation of an institutional system to oversee the SDGs.

A cornerstone of Honduras’ progress to-date is their institutional development, primarily referring to the establishment of two central governance bodies— the High-Level Commission and the Technical Commission. The High-Level Commission makes decisions and provides oversight to ensure effective implementation while the Technical Commission conducts analysis, creates proposals and suggestions for the High-Level Commission. The mandate of commissions began with the definition of the Honduran National Agenda for the SDGs that links the goals to existing country documents.

The report focuses on the distinct roles of both governmental and non-governmental actors in the implementation of the Agenda. At the regional level, socialization sessions with local leaders have encouraged linkages between the Agenda 2030 and national plans. Pilot exercises at the municipality level focused on knowledge management, strategy planning and harmonization, and organizational strengthening. UN agencies and other international stakeholders formulated the Development Assistance Program for Honduras (MANUD), adopted by the Honduran Government in 2016. The plan outlines the efforts of various UN agencies and delineates strategic areas for Honduras. Child related programs within MANUD include those focusing on “A Honduras without extreme poverty, with education and health, and with consolidated systems of social protection.”

SDG-specific reporting in the review is brief and varied in content. Out of the 5 SDGs elaborated on, children are directly referenced in two of the SDGs detailed. Under SDG 3, ensuring healthy lives and well-being, the report cites the ***Criando con Amor (Growing with Love) program developed with the support of UNICEF from 2017-2021. The Early Childhood Development program aims to reach children zero to six years old and their parents with access basic services and education.*** Towards SDG 4 (quality education), the report details an analysis of the National System of Education of Honduras and the production of the *Strategic Plan for the Education Sector 2017-2030*. The goal of this effort is to incorporate the SDGs into the educational curriculum of the country. The other SDGs mentioned do not mention children specifically. Poverty, the focus of SDG 1, is a major focus for Honduras. A significant development was the Honduran Multidimensional Poverty Index. The other large-scale programmatic effort detailed in the report, “*La Alianza para el Corredor Seco,*” (The Alliance for the Dry Corridor) is an initiative aimed at families to reduce chronic malnutrition and mitigate the humanitarian crisis created by the drought in Honduras. There was no specific mention of children in the drought crisis. The most thorough progress on a goal appears to be in SDG 6 on clean water and sanitation, exemplifying the multi-stakeholder approach and incorporation into country planning, establishment of monitoring systems, and financial support through partnerships.

See full report: [Examen Nacional Para La Revision Voluntaria Agenda 2030: Gobierno de la Republica Honduras](#)





INDIA

The National Institution for Transforming India (NITI Aayog), the premier think tank of the Government of India, has led the process of preparing *India's Voluntary National Review*. The NITI Aayog, with the Prime Minister as its chairperson, is tasked to provide the overall coordination and leadership of the SDGs. Informing the VNR, NITI Aayog conducted a mapping of national ministries and initiatives to the 17 SDGs. This in combination with the coordination of an intra-governmental Task Force and consultations with multi-stakeholders on SDG related progress and plans informed a *Three-Year Action Agenda* and the developing *7-Year Strategy Document* and *15-Year Vision*. The report itself focused on the Goals receiving in-depth review at the HLPF in 2017: Goal 1 (No poverty); Goal 2 (Zero Hunger); Goal 3 (Good Health and Well-being); Goal 5 (Gender Equality); Goal 9 (Innovation and Infrastructure) and Goal 14 (Life under water).

The VNR reports that most of the state governments have also matched strategic insights from the national development and 2030 agendas with their own specific contexts and priorities. State Planning and Development departments are also operating as focal points for facilitating the process of SDG implementation. Bi-annual reviews will be conducted with the state governments.

The Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation has developed a list of draft national indicators and the Government is also considering setting up a high-level Committee headed by the Chief Statistician of India to oversee the monitoring framework for SDGs at the national level.

The report repeatedly highlights the consultative processes in SDG implementation and monitoring, citing partnerships with Civil Society Organizations. CSOs are given a key role in working on SDG-related issues from the grassroots to the national level. The report notes their efforts in raising awareness of the SDGs, supporting SDG integration at the state level and conducting research.

The report includes an extensive section reviewing the six goals under review with baselines, visual presentations and case studies of initiatives and policies. For instance, under the gender goal, a case study on a state's effort to reduce the school dropout rates for girls highlighted the initiative to provide bicycles to every girl who was entering Class 9 or 10 to make transportation to school easier and safer. This reportedly resulted in a substantial decrease in the dropout rate of girls from school.

The VNR's reference to children as a vulnerable group is strong but its reference to children and youth as change agents is non-existent. The report states that programmes are being implemented with a special focus on vulnerable groups such as women and children for ensuring access to basic services such as education, water and sanitation, health, and nutrition security. India names a few specific national efforts such as the Right to Education Act, the National Health Mission, the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) initiatives and the Save the Girl Child Educate the Girl Child.

While these references are positive, unlike the majority of VNRs that mention youth groups more than children, India's VNR does not make mention of youth or young people once. This point demonstrates the lack of any reference to children's participation or active role in SDG implementation as young change agents.

See full report: [Voluntary National Review Report: India](#)



INDONESIA

In Indonesia, the SDGs are aligned the President's vision for Indonesia's national development (*Nawacita*), which is integrated in development policies, strategies and programs of *National Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMN) 2015-2019*, and translated into Government Work Plan (RKP) with its associated budget.

The preparations of the VNR included four major stakeholder groups: the government (both national and subnational); civil society; philanthropy and business; and academics and experts. They employed a number of principles to encourage active participation, both online and offline, in order to make the process transparent and inclusive. See Indonesia's [SDG website](#) for more information.

Indonesia has complemented its VNR with a [SDG Baseline Report on Children in Indonesia](#) which was published jointly by the Ministry of Development Planning (BAPPENAS) and UNICEF. Developed in collaboration with 11 ministries, the report pulls together disaggregated baselines from existing national data (government surveys and administrative data) and supports Government's capacity to track and report on progress for SDGs and children specifically. The Report constitutes an important step in making children visible in planning and monitoring SDG in Indonesia, and presents new opportunities to advance policy discussions with Government on emerging SDG issues. The Minister of Bappenas, representing the Government of Indonesia, launched the report at both international level at the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) in July, and at national level in August 2017.

Indonesia has reported progress in significantly reducing the number of people living in poverty over the last decade, but notes that the absolute number of people living in poverty stands at 22.76 million people and disparities among regions remain. The fulfilment of basic needs for the poor and vulnerable groups has been expanded through improving child delivery services at health facilities; providing birth certificates; improving net enrolment rates of elementary level (SD/MI/equal to 7-12 years old, SMP/MTs/ equal to 13-15 years old, SMA/SMK/MA/equal to 16-18 years old); improving access to improved drinking water and sanitation, improving the quality of urban residential houses and access to electricity. In addition, poor and vulnerable groups are provided with comprehensive basic immunization services for children aged 12-23 months and access to contraceptive services. Victims of disaster are also provided with access to basic services to prevent from falling into poverty (page viii)."

The Government also made explicit reference to the issue of child poverty, stating "Child poverty is also an important issue in Indonesia which requires government to shape its interventions to accommodate the needs of poor children" (page xi). UNICEF provided technical support to the National Statistical Bureau (BPS) to strengthen analytical capacity for child poverty analysis, and produce the Government's first report on child poverty, including monetary and multi-dimensional child poverty. The Government of Indonesia as a result adopted MODA as SDG indicator for multidimensional child poverty. The results show that children are more likely to live in poverty and in vulnerable economic situations than other groups. Although there has been a decline in child poverty (national poverty line of IDR 12 000 a day) between 2009 and 2016 from 16 to 13 per

cent, 57 percent of children still live under twice the national poverty line. The results also show that 65 percent of children in Indonesia are deprived in two or more of dimensions of well-being.

The Government noted reductions in child stunting and wasting and the link between food, nutrition and education, stating "Education influences behaviour (parenting and eating patterns) that in turn affects the nutritional status of children. The lower the education of mothers the worse nutritional status of children. Therefore, access to education needs to be improved" (pages 22, 24). The Government mentioned their explicit **focus on early childhood development through their implementation of the *First 1000 Days of Life Movement*** and the impact this will ultimately have on national health and prosperity. The report states "Malnutrition early in life can cause irreversible damage to children's brain development and their physical growth, leading to a diminished capacity to learn, poorer performance in school, greater susceptibility to infection and disease and a lifetime of lost earning potential" (page 28).

The percentage of children receiving diphtheria, pertussis and tetanus (DPT) vaccine is often used as an indicator of how well countries are providing routine immunization services. In 2015, national coverage for the third dose of DPT stood at 74 per cent, according to the SUSENAS survey. Protection against measles was somewhat higher, at 82 per cent. Both fall below the targets of 90–95 per cent. A child's immunization status is strongly associated with her or his place of residence. For instance, children living in Maluku or Papua are two times less likely to receive all their basic vaccinations compared with their peers born in Bali or Kepulauan Riau. Disparities by wealth and parental education levels are less pronounced. Overall, under-coverage is still substantial: only half of children 12–23 months of age received all basic vaccinations.

Child Marriage has decline while the median age at first marriage for women has increased, though there remains a significant disparity between urban and rural populations.

Education rates have overall increased for both girls and boys, including at the junior high school level where the report notes there "were more children aged 13–15 years from the poor and vulnerable groups who were able to utilize the Junior High School Level education facilities" (page 15)

The VNR report also showcased a number of activities at the local/village level, including **community efforts to end violence against women and children in Papua by raising awareness and working with local religious leaders. UNFPA, UN WOMEN and UNICEF were credited in supporting these efforts** (page 58).

See full report: [Republic of Indonesia: Voluntary National Review \(VNR\): Eradicating Poverty and Promoting Prosperity in a Changing World](#)



ITALY

The *Italian Voluntary National Review* was in essence a presentation of its *National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS)*. The report was strong in detailed plans but lacking analysis of baselines or status on SDGs. However, result-oriented details should be forthcoming by the end of this year (2017) within the future Plan of Action which will include numerical and quantitative targets at 2030, as well as policy impacts. The **Government will provide an**

annual review about the implementation of the NSDS as well as an assessment of the achieved results. To this aim, the National Statistical System is progressively releasing sets of indicators.

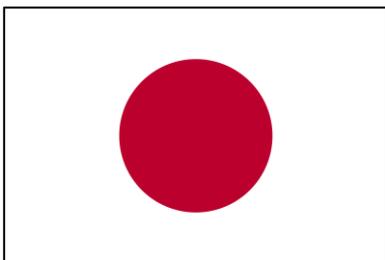
The last decade-long economic crisis has provided evidence of the growth of inequalities in Italy. Inequality can only be effectively fought by adopting an integrated vision for inclusive growth. Referencing the need for **integration in order to address growing inequalities**, The NSDS is touted as a first step towards a holistic policy framework, widened to include social and economic dimensions in addition to the traditional environmental development policy, in line with the 2030 Agenda.

Plans to sustain the national strategy's consultation efforts, in combination with the specific national target to **"Encourage youth and children participation to make them 'actors of change,' promote social integration, and inclusive education and training"** is an opportunity for UNICEF and partners to ensure better children and youth participation in Italy's consultation efforts. Multi-level consultations are referenced as a key process for developing the NSDS. Yet while over 200 NGOs were said to participate in the public consultations, the report does not detail which organizations were involved and what were the outcomes. The Ministry for the Environment, Land and Sea will ensure the participation of civil society and relevant stakeholders by creating a Forum on the Strategy for Sustainable Development building on the positive experience of the NSDS consultation process and ensuring continuity by setting up similar multi-level consultation processes. The Ministry should be encouraged to invite children and youth to the forum.

On a related note, a cross-cutting field of the national strategy is education, awareness and communication in order to encourage life-long learning and best practices for sustainable development but there is no mention of the specific involvement of children and youth. This is an opportunity to build on UNICEF efforts to raise the awareness and engagement of children on the SDGs through education and entertainment with the help of tools such as the World's Largest Lesson.

Thematically, the issue of **protecting children and women against violence is a focus in the national strategy and a specific national strategic goal. It states that "the phenomenon of physical, sexual and psychologic violence against women and children is serious and widespread in the Italian territory."** Protecting migrants and migrant children from violence is also highlighted, calling to put in place adequate integration and reception policies aimed at guaranteeing the social rights of migrants and asylum seekers, **with special focus on unaccompanied minors.**

See full report: [Voluntary National Review: Italy](#)



JAPAN

The Government of Japan has done much work in preparing their country for SDG implementation including their 2017 VNR. A new Cabinet body called the "SDGs Promotion Headquarters", headed by the Prime Minister and comprising all ministers was formed in May 2016. The SDGs Promotion Headquarters was established "to foster close cooperation among relevant ministries and government agencies, and to lead the comprehensive and effective implementation of SDGs-related measures as a control tower" (page 4). After consultation with various stakeholders, the "SDGs Implementation Guiding Principles" was adopted in December 2016, which became the basis of 2017 VNR.

Based on the “Principles” in the VNR, **the Government of Japan has placed a strong emphasis on building future generations of children that live by the values articulated through the SDGs, and see schools as a major channel for their broader work to get the public aware of and inspired by the SDGs.** Japan highlighted that public awareness of the SDGs is a necessary precedent to implementing SDG related measures as a national movement. In addition to establishing the SDG Promotion Headquarters, the report states, **“in order to nurture in children, who will lead society in 2030 and beyond, the competencies to be the future creators of sustainable societies and leaders of world, we are promoting *Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)*, as well as encouraging learning about SDGs in all settings, including schools, households, workplaces and local communities.”** This particular emphasis on SDG-focused Education was noted in a number of instances in the report, additionally stating: "Japan will promote SDGs-related education by improving curricula and revising teaching materials at schools in accordance with the new national curriculum standards that will be implemented from April 2020 (page 23)." The Japan National Committee Office is working with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on SDG-focused learning materials.

The Government of Japan prioritized a number of key issues for children as part of their domestic implementation of the SDGs: **reducing child poverty; increasing inclusive and equitable education; and prevention of child injury, sexual exploitation and child abuse.** The priorities of the Government of Japan were further articulated in their document: [Outline of the SDGs Implementation Guiding Principles](#), which articulated eight broad areas of focus.

Japan has noted their child poverty ranking of 25 out of 35 OECD countries and has been taking countermeasures to improve the situation, including through ***The General Principles of Policy on Poverty among Children*** drafted in 2014 (page 22).

Japan has also focused on issues of child injuries and taking measures to combat child abuse and sexual exploitation of children. Child welfare and protection laws and have recently been enacted on this front, including the "Law to revise a part of the Child Welfare Law" and the "Basic Plan on Measures against Child Sexual Exploitation" (page 45).

See full report: [Japan's Voluntary National Review: Report on the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals](#)



JORDAN

The *Jordan Voluntary National Review* is very strong in both detailing SDG integration into national and subnational plans as well as demonstrating a strong commitment to participatory processes in planning and implementation. *Jordan 2025* is a 10-year vision whereas the *Executive Development Plans (EDP)* translate *Jordan 2025* into actionable and measurable development programmes for each governorate through three or four year cycles. The *EDP for 2016-19* is currently under implementation, covering 26 development sectors and identifying the role of 123 partners in 2,126 projects. The *EDP* has 600 indicators that monitor progress of the *EDP* which include the majority of SDG indicators.

Demonstrating massive mainstreaming efforts, Jordan further lists over 20 additional national sectoral plans that have integrated Agenda 2030. *The Higher National Committee for Sustainable Development* is to be the body that oversees the implementation of 2030 Agenda. This National Committee will have a Coordination Committee under it with 18 working groups to ensure coverage of all SDGs. At the subnational level, the *Governorate Development Programme* has been prepared for all 12 governorates, supporting the mainstreaming of the SDGs into governorate development plans. The VNR presents incredible detail to these institutional structures.

All the while, **these plans have been done with the active participation of civil society organizations, the private sector, academia, women, youth, local communities and councils, to ensure that national plans meet the national needs and aspirations. Such a participatory and consultative approach builds on Jordan’s national consultation process during post-2015 negotiations with the participation of 60,000 citizens.** Similarly, in preparation for the voluntary national review, Jordan encouraged the participation of all stakeholders, and highlighted that “participation of everyone in decision-making is crucial not only during the preparatory stage but also for the success of the Agenda’s implementation.” The VNR continued to declare that for Jordan, **“youth are the country’s most dynamic citizens and they must play an active role in the economic, social, environmental and political development of Jordan and in shaping its future development...Jordan cannot move forward in achieving the SDGs without optimal investment in half of its population or its youth who represent approximately a third of the population. Youth and women represent the priority targets under the SDGs and the most critical cross-cutting themes to achieve the 2030 Agenda.”** The commitment to consultative processes and youth engagement were further illustrated through a stakeholder engagement strategy to ensure the widest participation from all NGOs in the SDG implementation and VNR preparation organized by the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation. The strategy proposes a variety of fora including taskforce meetings, workshops, focus groups and debates as well as a number of outreach tools like printed materials, social media engagement, and others. The strategy outlines government intentions of raising awareness of the SDGs and communication between government and stakeholders to ensure ownership and partnerships around agenda 2030.

The “demographic transition” was mentioned as one of the leading reasons why youth have an important role in national SDG implementation. Under the ‘People’ priority, the section mostly focused on the importance of investing and engaging youth. ***The National Youth Empowerment Strategy for the years (2017-2025), currently under development, focuses on five thematic priority areas for young people: education, economic empowerment, active citizenship, health and peace and security, with full mainstreaming of the SDGs.*** “The strategy builds upon the energy, motivation, equal access to opportunities, and active participation of youth. It gives youth a pivotal role as peace makers and positive change leaders.” Throughout the report, there are multiple quotes from the Crown Prince, the Minister of and leadership regarding the importance of youth.

As for data-driven references to children, the Jordan VNR made mention of infant, under-five and maternal mortality rates, early childhood education and child labour: all of which require further action. Another key theme was the refugee crisis and Jordan’s call for international support to address. **Infant mortality rates** have decreased from 34 to 17 per 1,000 live births since 1990, **under-five deaths** have reduced from 37 to 21 per 1,000 live births and **maternal mortality rates** significantly lowered from 48 to 19 per 100,000 live births. This progress however is in context with **remaining disparities** where mortalities are higher among poorest households and in the Southern governorates. The Government has set a target to reduce infant mortality (with

a special focus on neo-natal mortality) and under-five mortality rates by two thirds to reach 6 and 7 per 1,000 live births respectively by 2030.

As for **Early Childhood Education**, the VNR addresses that development services are still not available in sufficient numbers to the public. The combined enrollment rate for kindergarten one (KG1) and two (KG2) is 32.9%, while the enrollment rate for KG2 is 59%. Although KG2 enrollment has increased, there is still an urgent need to provide 2,800 classrooms in order to accommodate all children between the ages of five and six. Enrollment rates in KG1, which is currently almost exclusively provided by the private sector, is about 18%, while the enrollment rate for nurseries is only 3%. There is, therefore, a need to raise enrollment rates in all regions of the Jordan by at least 2% annually. On the positive, the education policy in Jordan for the near future will **“integrate the concepts and principles of sustainable development in all stages of education, which will help build a responsible generation and contribute to economic, social and environmental development.”**

While youth unemployment is a significant issue, **child labour** has, alarmingly, more than doubled. The VNR reports that Jordan is paying close attention to the incidence of child labour, which emerged as a coping mechanism resulting from livelihoods challenges amongst both Syrian and Jordanian families. Child labour has more than doubled between 2007 and 2016 (from 33,190 to 75,981 children). However there was **no reference to child marriage** in the VNR despite the fact that UNICEF reports that 8% of all registered marriages in Jordan involve a girl less than 18 years of age and the rate of child marriages among Syrian refugees in Jordan has grown to 32% (state of world’s children, 2016).

Overall, Jordan’s VNR was very strong in terms of detailing the situation of children in the context of the SDGs, the process of localizing the SDGs into national efforts, and empowering and hearing the voices of youth.

See full report: [Jordan’s Way to Sustainable Development: First National Voluntary review on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda](#)



KINGDOM OF THE NETHERLANDS

The *Kingdom of the Netherlands’ Voluntary National Review* covered SDG plans and progress of **its four countries: Aruba, Curaçao, St Maarten, and the Netherlands**. The Report addressed key themes such as “institutionally embedding” the SDGs into government efforts, implementing the SDGs through “inclusive dialogue and consultations,” and engaging Youth, particularly through National Youth Councils, as partners. The report further

detailed plans and progress addressing each SDG, each with one section dedicated to details at home and a second dedicated to the Kingdom’s relevant work abroad.

In terms of institutionally embedding the SDGs, each four countries had at least started efforts to integrate the SDGs into respective national plans. **Curaçao** has developed a National Development Plan for 2017-2020 focusing on five priority areas: education, the economy, sustainability, national identity, and good governance and leadership, integrating the four SDGs that provide measurable targets responding to local challenges: SDGs 4, 7, 8, 14. Positively, the VNR reports that **“Youth representatives are actively involved in SDG implementation and are being encouraged to propose solutions, with a specific focus on youth policy.”** Curaçao established a **democratically elected National Youth Council in 2017 to engage young people in policymaking and in shaping**

their future. More than 300 young people participated in national youth dialogues aimed at ensuring broad support for the *National Action Programme for Youth Development*, which is also linked to the SDGs.

St Maarten will integrate the SDGs into its National Development Plan, which is currently being drafted with the intention to mainstream and integrate the SDGs. A commission has been established, representing the three ministries that are most involved in SDG implementation. This commission will conduct an information and communication campaign in its initial three-year phase, using a bottom-up approach to make the SDGs more widely known and obtain input from several groups inside and outside government. Additionally, St Maarten has reportedly developed a communication plan, focusing especially on reaching young people by including the SDGs in the school curriculum.

Aruba's National SDG Commission was established in January 2017 with the mandate to coordinate SDG mainstreaming and implementation working closely with the government ministries and departments, NGOs and the private sector.

In the **Netherlands**, responsibilities have been assigned to all the ministries concerned, with the Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation in charge of overall coordination. An SDG network of focal points with representatives from each ministry and the Association of Netherlands Municipalities has been established and meets regularly. It is chaired by a specially appointed high-level coordinator for national SDG implementation, assisted by a small secretariat. The Netherlands has also conducted work to collect SDG data. It was one of the first countries to conduct a baseline survey of national efforts to achieve the SDGs. The report, [*Measuring the SDGs: An Initial Picture for the Netherlands*](#), compiled by Statistics Netherlands, was published in November 2016. In the Netherlands, data are currently available for 37% of the SDG indicators.

A specific section of the report addresses “**implementing the SDGs through inclusive consultation**” and another addresses how youth are one of six stakeholder groups that contributed to the VNR and involved in SDG implementation and monitoring. **The Government of the Netherlands encourages young people's role in achieving the SDGs, and has appointed youth representatives. These youth representatives and the National Youth Council (NJR) of the Netherlands organise workshops and events that reach about 30,000 young people each year and raise awareness of the SDGs.** Consultations with youth revealed that the SDGs which young people in the Netherlands feel are especially relevant to them include education, climate action, mental health, equality and labour. On the topic of equality, “specific concerns include the rights of LGBT people, abused children, young people with disabilities, young people in need of special care (including mental healthcare), ethnic minority young people and gender equality.” The section concludes stating, “Young people believe that the Netherlands could step up involvement in SDG implementation. It would be a missed opportunity not to take full advantage of young people's growing sense of commitment.”

In terms of the report's reference to the situation of children in the context of the SDGs, details were provided under poverty and social protection, nutrition, education and child protection.

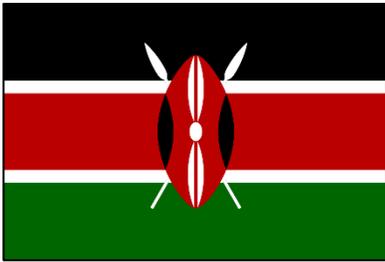
To address **poverty** in the Netherlands, efforts focused on **social protection** and support to various groups in society, with an emphasis on parents with young children and people with disabilities. In 2012, the Government stepped up policies to prevent poverty and debt, with a structural annual investment of an extra €100 million.

“To ensure that all children grow up in a supportive environment,” the report states, another extra €100 million is being invested each year starting from January 2017.

Dutch policies are also focusing on **nutrition** for children, specifically on addressing prevalence of obesity. Healthy Weight programmes in neighbourhoods and schools are aimed at substantially reducing the percentage of overweight children and young people.

Under **peace and justice**, Dutch priorities are combating human trafficking and fighting the exploitation of children in child sex tourism and child pornography, both at home and abroad. The education section specifically mentioned Netherland’s support to UNICEF programmes educating children in conflict areas.

See full report: [Kingdom of the Netherlands: Report on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals](#)



KENYA

Kenya is linking their work on development and the SDGs to their recently developed [2010 Constitution](#) and Bill of Rights which explicitly notes the rights of specific groups including children, youth and persons with disabilities (page 6).

Much of the report takes note of social protection measures aimed at operationalizing work on the SDGs to target vulnerable groups. The Government has instituted a number of social protection programmes, including in the sectors of water, roads/infrastructure, health facilities and electricity to marginalized areas. The *National Social Safety Net Programme (NSNP)* is one of the major government initiatives to help meet the SDGs (page 20). Within the NSNP, there is a specific cash transfer programme to target children, *the Orphans and Vulnerable Children- Cash Transfers (OVC-CT)*. Through their "expansion of *Technical and Vocational Educational Training (TVET)* institutions to the village level, the Government of Kenya endeavors to ensure that children and pupils from poor backgrounds attain a decent education and life skills that equip them to compete with those from privileged backgrounds" (page 18). The *Kenya Youth Empowerment Project (KYEP)*, among others, aims to reach the disadvantaged, combat poverty and promote equity.

Kenya has noted that the proportion of people suffering from hunger has fluctuated. There has been a decrease in the rate of stunting in children under 5 to 26% (compared to 35.3 % in 2008), but there are marked disparities between rural and urban populations. Child malnutrition is higher in the poorest households and Kenya plans to address such disparities with more devolved funding (e.g. to community levels).

In their *Health Sector Strategic and Investment Plan*, Kenya has identified six policy objectives for the health care sector, which include: eliminate communicable diseases; halt and reverse burden of non-communicable diseases; reduce the burden of violence and injuries; provide essential health care; minimize the exposure to health risk factors; and strengthen collaboration with sector providers. **Kenya has noted progress in reducing maternal mortality and under five mortality during the MDG era, but that rates remain unacceptably high** (page 23). Mother-to-child transmission of HIV has decreased from 12,000 (2013) to 4600 (2016) and the number of people living with HIV that have access to ARVs increased to 66%. Kenya has a unique statutory body

-- *the HIV and AIDS equity Tribunal* -- which has helped to unearth and redress HIV-related human rights violations. It may be a useful model for replication in other countries (page 24).

UNICEF has specifically worked with the Kenya Government on a project aimed at improving maternal and infant nutrition through sensitizing members of the private sector on the need to promote exclusive breastfeeding for children by providing working mothers with a conducive working environment as well as providing breaks for them to breastfeed their children. The project encourages businesses to create mother and baby friendly spaces which includes the creation of a lactation station for lactating mothers (page 26).

In the report, Kenya highlighted their introduction of free primary education in 2003 as significant contribution towards increasing enrollment rates for Kenyan boys and girls. Other highlights include increasing the reach of Early Childhood Development Education (ECDE) programmes and training; improvements to sanitation facilities in schools (particularly for girls); and supplementation of education expenses not covered by FPE for poorer students.

Kenya noted that they have set up a helpline aimed at combatting sexual and gender-based violence, but have acknowledged that challenges remain in ending harmful traditional practices such as FGM/C, and tolerance for gender-based violence in embedded in social-cultural norms (page 31).

Kenya has also noted the importance of citizen participation and public awareness in SDG implementation. The Ministry of Devolution and Planning has issued Public Participation Guidelines to support this idea (page 18).

See full report: [Implementation of the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development in Kenya](#)



LUXEMBOURG

The *Luxembourg Voluntary National Review* provides an overview of its existing development plans and trends in light of its new *National Sustainable Development Plan*, due in March of 2018. Luxembourg has conducted a mapping of Agenda 2030 with its current National Development Plan (PNDD) which was adopted by the Government in October of 2010. The new plan will

be informed by the implementation report drafted in May 2017 and the forthcoming gap analysis in November 2017 in addition to the civil society roundtable that occurred in January 2017 and the upcoming consultations with youth on October 20th. In the final pages of the VNR is an annexed mapping of the 2010 National Plan against the SDGs. The mapping is only at the goal level, thus lacking details on targets and indicators.

The Interdepartmental Commission on Sustainable Development (La Commission interdépartementale de développement durable, CIDD), is the central coordinator of the national sustainable development policy and is composed of delegates from ministries and government departments. It draws up the preliminary draft national plan for sustainable development, promotes and monitors the implementation of the plan and develops the VNR. Following the adoption of Agenda 2030 as a framework for sustainable development policy, the Government - aware that this comprehensive and complex agenda requires actions across several policy areas and organizational structures - modified the composition of the CIDD, in order to ensure the implementation of Agenda 2030. Statistically speaking, CIDD has initiated a process of selecting indicators to monitor the SDGs at national level.

The VNR dedicates an entire section on “the inclusive process” which states that Luxembourg “bears in mind that achieving such ambitious sustainable development objectives cannot be achieved solely by government action.” Thus Luxembourg intends to “involve actors such as young people, civil society, the private sector, municipalities and schools in the process of developing and implementing the National Plan for Sustainable Development.” Further referencing the importance of inclusive processes and the participation of civil society, the Higher Council for Sustainable Development (le Conseil Supérieur pour un développement durable, CSDD) serves as the representation of civil society. Its mission is to propose research and studies in all fields relating to sustainable development, encourage the widest possible participation of public and private as well as that of the citizens and to issue opinions on all measures relating to national policy sustainable development. The CSDD has initiated two main work areas in response to Agenda 2030: 1) developing a knowledge platform serving as an inventory of actions contributing to sustainable development in the Luxembourg and 2) initiating a communication campaign on Agenda 2030. **The CSDD co-launched the project “Yes we Care 2017” which aims to “stimulate the creativity of participants...providing solutions to economic, environmental and social problems.” Part of this campaign is a plan in October 2017 to organize a consultation with young people aged 16 to 26 on their expectations and their priorities for Luxembourg and the world in 2030.**

Challenges in child poverty, education and social integration – exacerbated by demographic changes and influx of foreign children such as refugees -- are highlighted in the VNR. Luxembourg highlights that children disproportionately are affected by poverty and inequality. In response, a draft law on income was tabled in January 2017 with four objectives, including one on addressing the poverty of children and single-parent families.

The report states that “demographic change has meant that Luxembourg society has lost part of its social homogeneity,” which has implications on an inclusive and satisfactory education system. “The prosperity of Luxembourg has resulted in unprecedented population growth, which poses the challenge of social inclusion and satisfactory education for children of great diversity.” According to the VNR, 60% of pupils entering the basic school (1st cycle) today are of foreign origin, 44% if all cycles are considered. “They constitute for many a fragile population in the education system (newcomers, refugees, etc.) and the priority of the Ministry of National Education and Youth is to facilitate their integration.” The plural-lingual education project in nurseries aims to help integrate foreign children by familiarizing languages as early as early childhood. **The Luxembourg education system is unique in that the first years of the children's curriculum are taught in German, with the secondary cycle continuing in French.**

The VNR process utilized by Luxembourg to take stock of current development structures in preparation of its upcoming plan. The launch of the new development plan in 2018 will provide more detail in terms of Luxembourg’s future plans as opposed to its past efforts.

To note, Luxembourg is a co-chair of the Group of Friends of Children in NYHQ of which UNICEF serves as secretariat. At the global level, Luxembourg assisted in promoting UNICEF messaging with other Member States.

See full report: [Rapport sur la mise en œuvre de l’Agenda 2030 au et par le Luxembourg](#)



MALAYSIA

The *Malaysian Voluntary National Review* addresses the country's efforts to align key elements of the SDGs with its five-year development plan, the *Eleventh Malaysia Plan 2016–2020 (11MP)*, which strives to “complete the journey to become a developed nation by 2020.” The *11MP* focuses on a “paradigm shift towards more participatory government by citizens, including NGOs/CSOs, as partners in service design and delivery.”

At the apex of the SDG governance structure is the National SDG Council, chaired by the Prime Minister of Malaysia. This Council plans and monitors SDG implementation with the support of a National Steering Committee (NSC), chaired by the Director General of the Economic Planning Unit. The NSC aims to operationalize the inclusive and participatory approach of the *11MP*, thus consists of five Task Forces including representatives from government, UN agencies, CSOs, the private sector and youth representatives.

To operationalize *11MP*, the *National SDG Roadmap 2016–2020* was adopted. The development involved a few key and participatory initiatives, engaging multi-stakeholders with SDG symposiums to promote SDG awareness and participation as well as multi-stakeholder engagement with a mapping exercise to align the SDGs with *11MP* initiatives. Participatory efforts were driven by the Economic Planning Unit (EPU), and supported by the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) in Malaysia.

Moving forward, Malaysia's means of implementation will include a focus on localizing the SDGs at subnational levels, mobilizing resources and funding through partnerships and strengthening data readiness to develop a comprehensive dataset for SDG implementation.

Related to youth engagement, these SDG plans are complimented by a ‘*National Transformation 2050 Plan*’ (*TN50*) which specifically plans for the future and future generation of Malaysia. In this regard, **The Ministry of Youth and Sports have started engaging Malaysian youth since early 2017 in various forums ranging from town hall dialogues to online surveys. Through this youth engagement, more than 680,000 youths have been engaged with more than 30,000 inputs gathered. Inputs from the youth engagement have been collated and divided into five main themes, namely: work and value creation; living and well-being; governance; society; and lifestyle. The “bottom-up approach” is used to ensure that the *TN50* document incorporates aspirations or inputs from all segments of the society to ensure inclusivity and a sense of ownership towards making it a reality. This strategy notably aligns to UNICEF messaging on the importance of including and investing in children for future social and economic returns.**

In terms of referencing children, the VNR goes beyond the SDGs under review and provides a snapshot of progress under all 17 SDGs. For the SDGs under review, however, the VNR dedicates a more thorough examination of progress. Each section includes an introduction, a table of data and a page explaining how the SDG has been integrated into the National Plan in addition to other sectoral plans and policies.

With strong reference to priority SDG indicators for children, statistics were included under child poverty, nutrition, health, education, gender, and protection. Key disaggregation was included when available and where relevant and most data was from 2015 or 2016, thus mostly recent. For instance, **2% of Malaysian**

children live below the Poverty Line Income, a decline from 9% in 2009. Child and maternal mortality rates are almost at the level of developed countries. Adolescent birth rates declined more than half between 1991 and 2015 but 69% of youth surveyed still felt they had insufficient information about Sexual Reproductive Health, showcasing the importance of perception data to complement statistics. Nutrition remains a key issue for Malaysian children with a 20% stunting prevalence for children under 5. Implementing food supplementation programmes for children from poor and low-income households was identified as a key success factor in addressing this.

Protection of women and children is a key concern for Malaysia, citing the ratification of several international agreements including the CRC. *The Sexual Offences Against Children Act 2017* was passed and the *Plan of Action for the Advancement of Women* includes the aim to increase accessibility to quality early childcare and childhood education.

Throughout the report, multiple National policies and plans that refer to children were referenced such as the *National Policy on Children and its Plan of Action*, *National Child Protection Policy and its Plan of Action*, and the *Plan of Action on Child Online Protection (PTCOP)* among others.

The report also credits development success on a history of child-centric, multidimensional interventions since the 1970s where the expansion of education, health, poverty eradication, water and sanitation and nutrition programmes “allowed a growing population to have the physical health and skills to participate fully” in society and the economy.

At the global HQ level, Malaysia co-sponsored an HLPF side-event with UNICEF titled [Bringing Awareness and Action on the SDGs to the Classroom: a Presentation of Students’ Experience with the World’s Largest Lesson](#). The event was also co-sponsored by Bulgaria and Argentina. Speakers included Mr. Kennedy Mayoung, Charge d’Affaires of the Permanent Mission of Malaysia to the UN; the President of the General Assembly; Anthony Lake; the CEO of Nord Anglia Education; and students.

See full report: [Malaysia: Sustainable Development Goals Voluntary National Review 2017](#)



MALDIVES

With the Maldives being a Small Island Development State (SID) comprised of 1192 islands, much of their primary issues of concern are around the unique environmental challenges and vulnerabilities faced by the nation. That being said, there were some useful references to children and youth in the report. The report noted that current demographics -- the working-age population (15 to 64 years old) outnumbers young dependents (those under 15 years old)

by a 2 to 1 margin -- indicates that the country could be poised to capture the benefits of a first demographic dividend (page 4).

The Maldives noted the importance of stakeholder ownership of the SDGs -- especially civil society -- and has created a "national forum" to ensure civil society contributions and participation (page 6). Among stakeholder groups considered, "students" are specifically mentioned, together with "civil society organizations, parliamentarians and local councils" (page 5).

The Maldives did not go into great detail regarding their work on poverty or hunger, but did note on the latter, that because the Maldives does not produce much of the food they consume, they are vulnerable to external economic shocks.

On the issue of health, the **Maldives noted positive trends in decreased infant mortality, under 5 mortality and maternal mortality and noted "the decline of maternal mortality ratio is due to factors such as the wide dispersion of obstetric and other health services to outer atolls, with access to skilled attendants in delivery and provision of antenatal care"** (page 9). The report also highlighted that the "reproductive health needs of young people deserve a special attention. As such, a more holistic approach towards access to adolescent friendly health services including reproductive health services is needed. This includes issues of sexual and gender-based violence, sexual diversity, discrimination, relationship issues, and fears and concerns about sex and sexuality (pages 9, 10).

In terms of education, **the Government employs a "no child left behind" policy and children are guaranteed 14 years of free education, starting at age 4 with pre-primary/early education** (page 10). This also includes children with disabilities. However, a challenge noted is a "widely dispersed, population greatly increases the cost of providing educational services. The inherent constraints imposed by distant and small, dispersed populations greatly increase the associated costs and adversely affect the provision of educational services" (page 11).

The Government also highlighted their efforts to prevent domestic abuse and violence against women and children through the ***Domestic Violence Prevention Act 3/2012*** and the establishment of ***Family Children's Services Centers (FCSC)*** in each of the 19 atolls of the country (page 12).

See full report: [Voluntary National Review for the High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development 2017: Republic of Maldives](#)



MONACO

Monaco is a small European country with less than 40,000 residents. Their VNR largely focused on the Governments' commitment to mitigating the effects of climate change and working on the preservation of oceans, biodiversity and water. The report also highlighted the international work supported by the Government including support for resilience and socio-economic development of vulnerable populations including refugees and street children. An interdepartmental working group, under the authority of

the Minister of State produced the report.

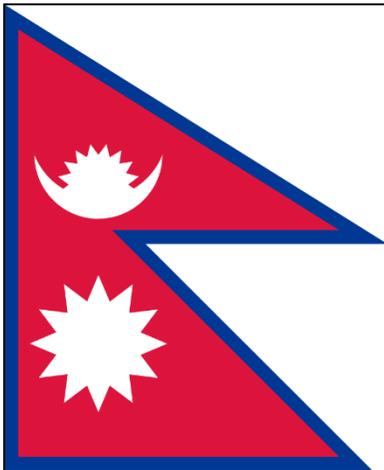
The report itself focused on the Goals receiving in-depth review at the HLPF in 2017: Goal 1 (No poverty); Goal 2 (Zero Hunger); Goal 3 (Good Health and Well-being); Goal 5 (Gender Equality); Goal 9 (Innovation and Infrastructure) and Goal 14 (Life under water).

In the areas of child health and nutrition, **Monaco reports encouraging breastfeeding as part of domestic in-hospital maternity services and working with young people on healthy lifestyles including fighting obesity and**

preventing addiction. Monaco reports that from birth, every child benefits from regular medical care. At age 2 months, it is likely to be at a community or family day-care center, at the age of 3, in pre-school settings. All structures benefit from doctors which may intervene with the support of dedicated psychologists. During schooling, compulsory from the age of 6 years, education programs for health care are provided, for which facilities have staff trained in detecting mental disorders, to intervene urgently with children in physical or moral danger and to promote integration of children with disabilities.

Although UNICEF does not have a presence in Monaco, **the Government noted they have supported UNICEF in Mongolia on a project to extend early childhood education services to the most disadvantaged children and strengthen the participation of families in early stimulation and preparation at school, working with children, parents, teachers and local service providers.** Another programme worked on with UNICEF is the reintegration of former child soldiers and rehabilitation of street children in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

See full report: [Voluntary Report on the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals](#)



NEPAL

Nepal's VNR process is coordinated by the National Planning Commission (NPC) together with a steering committee chaired by the Prime Minister. The NPC has constituted nine SDG implementation and monitoring committees (economic; social; industrial; infrastructure; urban; energy; agriculture, climate change and environment; governance, employment generation and management). These committees held consultation meetings with line ministries and other government institutions. Consultative workshops were organized by NPC with government evaluation and oversight agencies, a community of evaluators and academia.

From the VNR, it was unclear if civil society, children and youth or other stakeholders had direct feedback into the report, however it was noted that Nepal's civil society has established an SDGs Discussion Forum, which has identified 23 constituencies (children, women, Dalits, Madhesis, indigenous people, persons with disabilities, farmers, rural and urban poor, disadvantaged areas, LGBTIQ, local authorities, migrants, senior citizens, PLHIV, NGOs, business and industry, scientific and technological community, workers and trade unions, cooperative, media and youth) and 19 thematic areas (education, health, environment and climate, agriculture food sovereignty and nutrition, WASH, energy, sustainable cities, forestry, water resources, land resources, disaster management, governance, anti-corruption, access to justice, human rights, peace building, development financing, consumer protection and women and gender justice) for partnership and for the implementation of the SDGs (page 12). Civil society has a particular role to play in raising awareness of the SDGs, especially among hard to reach populations such as people with disabilities, socially and geographically excluded people, the poorest of the poor, orphans, single women and PLHIV and their children (page 31).

Nepal highlighted a number of items of "unfinished business" from the MDGs to be prioritized as part of their SDG implementation efforts, many of which have direct implications for children. They are:

- Reducing wide gaps between the level of poverty across all regions, social groups, age, sex, and by disability status;
- Reducing the dropout rate of school students, increasing quality of education especially of the community schools;
- Increasing the grade promotion rates of girls in secondary schools and the enrolment of women in technical and vocational education and training;
- Addressing the wide disparities in child mortality rates across sub-regions and social groups;
- The reduction of the MMR across all geographic regions, social groups and income quintiles;
- Increasing public financing for disease prevention and control, scaling up HIV treatment and care, sustaining the reduced incidence of malaria and tackling multi-drug resistant TB;
- Sustaining environmental achievements, protecting Nepal from the negative effects of climate change and preventing biodiversity loss;
- Receiving committed official development assistance and increasing aid effectiveness, focusing on development results and mutual accountability, access to international markets, trade facilitation and aid for trade.

In terms of reviewing the Goals, Nepal choose to focus specifically on the Goals receiving in-depth review at the HLPF in 2017: Goal 1 (No poverty); Goal 2 (Zero Hunger); Goal 3 (Good Health and Well-being); Goal 5 (Gender Equality); Goal 9 (Innovation and Infrastructure) and Goal 14 (Life under water).

On Goal 1, Nepal noted their progress in reducing extreme poverty from a rate of 33.5 % in 1990 to 16.4 % in 2013. The also noted progress on Multi-dimensional poverty, which was reduced from 64.7 percent in 2006 to 44.2 percent in 2015. These achievements were largely due to improved health and education and increased remittances incomes (page 14). There was no explicit reference to child poverty in the report.

On Goal 2, the Government acknowledged persistent challenges with underweight children. Thought the overall number has been reduced, disparities remain between urban and rural children and between wealth quintiles. It was highlighted that children of women with no education are more likely to be underweight as are children from poorer families (page 15).

Stunting also remains a significant issue: 40% of rural children in the country are stunted (32% urban) and 46% of children born to mothers with no education are stunted as compared to 23% of children born to mothers with secondary education, making a clear link between education of girls and women and children's health, nutrition and well-being.

Nepal is working to improve the situation as detailed in the *Zero Hunger Challenge National Action Plan* and increasing agricultural productivity. Nepal is also a member of the global *Scaling-up Nutrition (SUN) Movement*. **UNICEF and the Government work together on "the Golden 1000 Days" Campaign, an awareness raising initiative to improve the nutritional status of pregnant women and children up to 2 years of age** (page 16).

On Goal 3, Nepal has made progress on reducing child mortality, reducing their under-five mortality rate from 91/1000 live births in 2000 to 38/1000 in 2015 (page 16). They have also made significant progress on maternal health by simultaneously reducing total fertility rates and increasing women's access to antenatal care and skilled birth attendants (page 16).

Challenges remain reaching poor and marginalized people, particularly in hard to reach/remote/mountain areas. Free basic health care, free basic drugs, transport allowances, upgrades to health posts, and a focus on retention of health personnel for rural areas are helping to mitigate these challenges (page 17).

On SDG 5, the Government of Nepal highlighted gender parity in almost all levels of education, however, they have noted that women's participation in public sector decision making is low. There were no references to work being done on protection of children and or women from violence or work being done to end child marriage.

See full report: [National Review of Sustainable Development Goals](#)



NIGERIA

In Nigeria, the President has appointed a Senior Special Assistant to the President (SSAP) on SDGs whose office is responsible for ensuring horizontal and vertical coherence between development policies, plans and strategies. Similarly, an Inter-Ministerial Committee on the SDGs has been established for the coordinated engagement with Ministries, Departments and Agencies. Other stakeholder groups including the private sector, donors and civil society have also been included.

The recently-launched [Nigeria Economic Recovery and Growth Plan \(NERGP\)](#) which is also the basis of the current medium- and short- terms budgeting frameworks is, to a large extent, aligned to the SDGs. Similarly, many of the current State Development Plans (SDPs) are aligned to the SDGs.

A public awareness raising campaign has specifically focused on youth, engaging the *National Youth Service Corps (NYSC)* to train graduating youths to become SDGs champions in their local communities and areas of national service whereby they are deployed upon graduation. In fact, the Government noted the need for "Sensitization and advocacy to create and enhance awareness about the SDGs across the length and breadth of the nation and among "sub-national Governments; parliamentarians; heads and staff of Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs), Civil Society Organizations, the Academia, vulnerable population, groups and persons with disability; organized youth groups, Media; heads, and members of traditional institutions - among others" (page 11).

Nigeria recognized that persistent challenges remain on outcomes for children in the country noting: "her ranking at 137 on infant mortality out of 140 countries and 52 years as the national life expectancy average; only 59% proportion of births attended to by skilled personnel; a primary net enrolment ratio of 54%; some 10,000,000 school age children out of school; 63% of children in rural areas unable to read at all; 53% of infant and maternal death attributable to malnutrition; 24% of children under the age 5 underweight, and; 17,600,000 unemployed and unemployable youth in Nigeria" (page 17). Therefore they have articulated several policy initiatives in the areas of health and education to combat these issues.

As part of the national review process, Nigeria choose to focus specifically on the Goals receiving in-depth review at the HLPF in 2017: Goal 1 (No poverty); Goal 2 (Zero Hunger); Goal 3 (Good Health and Well-being); Goal 5 (Gender Equality); Goal 9 (Innovation and Infrastructure) and Goal 14 (Life under water), as well as Goals

4 (Quality Education), 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) and 17 (Partnership). A baseline figure for some of the targets under each goal appears in a table in each goals chapter, together with projections for the year 2020 on their way to "zero" or universal targets. Noting that all SDGs targets are not addressed, a possible explanation is that baseline data for those targets may not exist.

On Goal 1, Nigeria is focused on reaching poor and vulnerable households through the establishment of a "National Social Register" whereby poor households receive a monthly conditional cash transfer. They also discussed how they are integrating the principle of "leave no one behind" in other social safety net programs including: "upscaling the *Home-Grown School Feeding Programme* to provide a meal a day to at least 6 million primary school children (and also support the agriculture sector); enhancing the *N-Power* programme aimed to providing skilled and unskilled youth with decent jobs (page 20). The issue of measuring child poverty was not specifically addressed.

On Goal 2, Nigeria noted its current rate of stunting: of 37.45% among children of kindergarten and that one of the major policy responses was "to embark on an aggressive growth enhancement scheme to improve the yield of agricultural commodities. Huge investments were made on the setting up of irrigation sites for farmers in order to provide the platform for cultivation of agricultural products all year round" (page 24).

On Goal 3, the Government has rolled out the *National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS)* in addition to promoting tertiary and the *Public Primary Pupils Social Health Insurance Programme* to provide quality health services to students and pupils in middle and lower-income socio-economic levels who are unlikely to have coverage. To also accommodate the poor, a *Mobile and Community Health Insurance Programme* has been rolled out. About 59% of women were attended to by skilled health attendants both during and after child birth in 2015 (page 28). Nigeria's "main priority is to reduce infant and maternal mortality through the revitalization of health systems. The target is to establish at least one functional primary health centre (PHC) in each political ward across every local government in order to improve access to health care. Health care workers are recruited and provided with service allowance and basic amenities to work in rural communities and hard to reach areas. Modern health care equipment and drugs are supplied and distributed at affordable rate" (page 30).

On Goal 4, Nigeria noted progress in achieving gender parity and that its school feeding programme has been effective in enhancing school enrolment and incentivizing learning. A focus on teacher training and coaching and investments in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) education are intended to enhance the quality and relevance of education.

On Goal 5, Nigeria recognized challenges with early marriage and FGM/C. The *Ministry of Women Affairs & Social Development* has "developed a National Strategic Plan 2016-2021 aimed at ending child marriage in Nigeria whose highlights are the multi-sectoral and multi-faceted activities aimed at the objective of successfully ending child marriages in Nigeria. The Ministry has also established a child protection sub-working group, with mandate to coordinate Child Welfare Services, especially in the North-Eastern region of Nigeria" (page 39).

On Goal 16, as with other goals reviewed, the Government provided baseline data on some targets, including birth registration, but did not explicitly address the issue of ending abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children.

See full report: [Implementation of the SDGs: A National Voluntary Review](#)



PANAMA

The *Panama Voluntary National Review* cited a participatory process in its development as well as the development of the national strategy called *Panamá 2030*. The plan seeks to reduce poverty in general and eliminate extreme poverty through “interconnected, cross-cutting social policies and programmes targeting the most disadvantaged, promoting their access to basic services, social welfare and family support, fostering the growth of human capital and the reduction and gradual narrowing of social divisions.” In addition to the National Development Plan, Panama conducted a mapping of the national sectoral plans under three “people, prosperity and planet” categories. The Strategy of Youth 2015-19 (*Plan Estratégico de Juventud*) was specifically listed under People.

The Social Affairs Office is aligning public policy with Agenda 2030, coordinating a mechanism to monitor and follow up the goals, targets and indicators, as well as implementing a communication programme for the SDGs. **The Social Affairs office coordinated three consultations including public institutions, parliament, women's groups, indigenous peoples, Afro-descendants, young people, academics, entrepreneurs and cooperation agencies. In preparation of the VNR, the inclusive process was led by the Technical Secretariat of the Social Cabinet (STGS), as coordinator of the Technical Committee of the Interinstitutional Commission. UNICEF was specifically listed as involved.**

The VNR reported that Panama has four priority SDGs under its National Plan which are Health (SDG 3), Education (SDG 4), Inclusive Economic Growth (SDG 8) and Peace and Justice (SDG 16). However for the purpose of the VNR, the report focused on the six goals under review. Children’s issues were widely addressed under Poverty, Hunger, Health, and Gender. UNICEF was notably mentioned in the report 21 times.

On the topic of **poverty**, the VNR states that “significant progress has been made in areas such as human rights, especially with regard to the most vulnerable populations such as children, women and people living in extreme poverty.” The poverty section included a paragraph on specific measures supporting the early development of children under five. **Panama has a *Public Policy for Comprehensive Early Childhood Care (PAIPI)* which seeks that all children under five to have access to early stimulation, education, comprehensive health and nutrition. The policy is coordinated by the Council National Center for Comprehensive Care for Early Childhood (CONAIPI), chaired by the Office of the First Lady. Supporting an integrated approach, *The Integrated Care Route to Early Childhood (RAIPI)* requires the simultaneous provision of services by various entities of the State in order to guarantee the rights, care and services that every boy and girl must receive for their integral development.** The section didn’t provide data on how many children and living in poverty, but the table of indicators to be measured nationally included the proportion of children living in poverty in all its dimensions.

In terms of SDG 2, Panama has significantly reduced the number of people who are **hungry** but massive disparities for indigenous children have grown. From 2008 to 2014, prevalence of under-five stunting reduced from 19.1% to 17.7% but with indigenous areas at a significantly higher 55.6% in the Guna Yala Comarca and 31.3% in the Comarca Ngäbe Buglé. The realities in indigenous areas continue to reflect the profound disparities

and the need for targeted interventions. Therefore, in order to reach the goals in the year 2030 and reduce stunting among children under 5, Panama will advance targeted interventions to reduce malnutrition, malnourishment and hunger.

The VNR states that one of the challenges to achieving the SDGs is **health**, especially for women, girls and boys. The report calls for the strategy to “strengthen and expand the comprehensive coverage of reproductive, maternal, neonatal and child health in rural and indigenous areas.”

Education is named as a key tool to promote **gender equality** in the country. “To this end, Panama must implement programs and interventions in socio-educational institutions promoting equality and non-discrimination on grounds of sex; ensure the school climate that guarantees attendance and joint stay of boys and girls to school according to their ages, grades and competences; and spread and raise awareness about appropriate models of exercise of masculinity.”

References to UNICEF included a few citations, one stating: “Panama and UNICEF strengthen ties after meeting vice president and special representative, Marta Santos Pais, May 2017.”

Of note, **Panama serves as the Group of Friends of Children co-chair at UN NYHQ which is comprised of 55 Member States and of which UNICEF serves as secretariat.**

See full report: [Informe Voluntario Panama](#)



PERU

The Government of Peru informs that the adoption of the 2030 Agenda has spurred work to revise national policies and updating of the *National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP)* to align to the SDGs.

Peru reported that consultative workshops were conducted that included and prioritized the voices of those traditionally excluded from decision-making processes, ethnic minorities, children and youth and people with disabilities among others.

Peru also mentioned their work on the *Participatory Monitoring for Accountability* consultation process that took place in 2015 as informing their VNR process. The PMA consultation was facilitated by the Peruvian Ministry of Development and Social Inclusion (MIDIS) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MRE) together with the Governments of Canada and Republic of Korea, and was supported by UNICEF, UNDP and UN Women.

Peru mentioned some **work done to engage with young people including with The Millennials Movement (TMM), a non-profit organization led by young people, which promotes local sustainable development. TMM has provided the "Mi Mundo" survey in Peru since 2014. This year, it is initiating a new consultation process called "Implementing together the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development", TMM helped to include the views and contributions of civil society organizations in the implementation process of the Agenda 2030 in Peru.**

See full report: [Peru: Informe Nacional Voluntario sobre la implementación de la Agenda 2030 para el Desarrollo Sostenible](#)



PORTUGAL

Portugal referenced both the regional/EU strategy as well as their own domestic work as part of their VNR process. In November 2016, the EU released their report [Next steps for a sustainable European future](#) that sets out how the 2030 Agenda is to be implemented within the EU. Domestically, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was responsible for the national review, coordinating between various stake-holders. In February 2016, the Council of Ministers adopted the first intra-governmental guidelines for the 2030 Agenda, which articulates both domestic and international action.

Public consultation at local and national level was also facilitated by civil society. Eight workshops took place in different parts of the country, with a significant geographical scope, engaging participants representing more than 130 organizations. Moreover, this process included an online enquiry in an attempt to reach a wider audience and provide an opportunity for every citizen to share views, individually or on behalf of an organization.

On Goal 1, the report noted a particular focus on "child poverty, through the reinforcement of the support provided to families with children and ensuring access to all education levels to avoid the perpetuation of the intergenerational cycle of exclusion and inequality" (page 14). **The National Strategy on the Rights of Children 2017-2020 promotes an integrated approach in the fight against poverty and makes use of proximity measures and the reformulation of the levels of income in the access to family allowance. It also envisages a system of indicators to be vigilant of situations of social precariousness, fighting school dropouts and failure, guaranteeing the right to preschool education for all children** (page 15).

The National Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan also has some positive benefits for children and youth including: 1) to enhance the abilities of young people and their integration into employment, social and labour market with a special focus on the risk of social exclusion in marginalized communities; 2) *Apoio Social Escolar* (social educational support), ensuring the costs of school materials, meals and transportation in support of families in need with children in school age; 3) Educational Fields in need of Priority Intervention, providing additional support and resources for schools in disadvantaged backgrounds to promote success at school and reduce absenteeism and violence; and *Escolhas* (Choices), which supports projects aimed at the integration of children and young people from vulnerable communities with a priority in vocational training, digital inclusion and the empowerment of young people (page 16).

On Goal 2, the Government in promoting healthy eating habits with a focus on children, including free milk and fruit distribution in schools, a programme funded by the EU. A new food basket has been defined which takes into consideration the needs of different age ground including children under 2, children under 4 and children under 14. (page 20).

On Goal 3, a number of child, adolescent and maternal health interventions were highlighted including 1) *The National Health Plan 2020* for promoting healthier lives including combatting childhood obesity; 2) *The National Low-Risk Pregnancy Surveillance Programme* for prenatal and neonatal care provided to pregnant women; 3)

The National Child and Youth Health Programme for strengthening investment in youth issues related to child development, emotional and behavioral disorders and abusive treatment, especially focused on children with disabilities or special needs (page 22); 4) *The National School Health Programme* a school-based programme designed to contribute to better health, education, more equity and stronger involvement and accountability of all with the welfare and quality of life of children and young people; 5) *Cuida-te (Take Care)*, a programme specifically aimed at youth which cover topics such as healthy nutrition and preventing obesity, prevention of harmful consumptions and sexual and reproductive health; and 6) *Project Bebés, Crianças & Jovens em Segurança (Keeping Babies, Children & Youth Safe)* which focuses on children's road safety and the adoption of safe behavior by pregnant women, parents and families when transporting children in the car (page 24). Other highlights include, electronic records for birth registration and child health; and mental health interventions aimed at identifying behavioral problems, anxiety and depression in children and adolescents (page 24).

On Goal 4, the Government highlighted their five priorities in education: i) ensuring the provision of compulsory, free and universal basic education; ii) ensure the continuing education and eradicate illiteracy; iii) ensuring access to higher levels of education and research; iv) the progressive establishment of free education at all levels of education; v) and ensure the special and adequate education to disabled children of immigrants. In terms of challenges, they noted that even though pre-school attendance is high, much of the supply is private operators. There is, therefore, a need to increase public access to pre-school education (page 28). In terms of combatting issues of school failure and absenteeism, Portugal is focusing on marginalized groups including the Roma population via their *National Strategy for the Integration of Roma Communities*; and integration of children with special needs into the regular school system (page 28).

Portugal is also focused on gender equality, including the elimination of violence against women and girls; and with support from UNFPA and UNICEF has worked on an awareness campaign and high level meeting on ending female genital mutilation (page 33). Elimination of human trafficking and violence against children are identified priorities in goal 16 and are articulated through the *National Plan for Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Human Beings 2014-2017* and the *National Strategy for the Rights of the Child 2017-2020* respectively.



QATAR

Since 2008, Qatar has adopted the *Qatar National Vision QNV 2030* which aims to transform Qatar in 2030 into a developed country capable of achieving sustainable development, and ensuring a continuous decent living for its current and future generations. Qatar reviewed Goals 1-9, plus goal 17 as part of their VNR process.

There were not a lot of references to children and youth in the VNR, however, some notable highlights include **an increased focus on ECD by establishing the Early Childhood Department and the Department of Special Education and Talent Sponsoring; providing services to students with disabilities; and popularizing the "We are Healthy Kids" health programme.**

See full report: [Qatar: Voluntary National Review 2017](#)



SLOVENIA

Slovenia notes that the SDGs are aligned to their own development agenda, particularly over the last decade where the Government has focused on the environment, health, and sustainable tourism. They also note that Slovenia has the lowest rate of inequality among OECD countries, as measured by income redistribution and income growth for the bottom 40% of the

population.

Slovenia has decided to embed the SDGs in their own *National Development Strategy 2030* and "the process of preparing VNR in 2017 gave additional impetus to build partnerships among ministries, civil society, business sector, parliamentarians, and academia, to work diligently in building a whole-of-a-government approach and breaking apart silos." An Inter-ministerial coordination mechanism has been established and is facilitated by the Office of the Prime Minister. In 2017, the Government commenced a gap analysis of the 169 targets of the SDGs to see where there were existing government policies and measurements (or not).

The VNR makes special mention that engagement with the younger generation is critical and the report includes the inputs of the representatives of the *National Youth Council of Slovenia (MSS)*. In fact, there is an entire chapter/Special Report entitled: *Youth in Slovenia in the context of the 2030 Agenda* (page 62-66) that includes the inputs from this Council. They noted that top youth priorities are "employability, housing issues, education, health, participation, mobility, information-sharing, volunteering, and youth organising" (page 62). These priority areas were determined by a survey conducted by the MSS among 15-29 year-olds in the country.

On the issue of poverty, MSS noted that youth and the elderly are disproportionately affected. For youth, boosting youth employment and access to more affordable housing are essential.

In the areas of health, non-communicable diseases rank as high priorities, including risk of obesity, smoking and abuse of alcohol. On the issue of education, young people felt that Slovenia provided high accessibility of quality education for children and youth, but that opportunities in the space of non-formal education could be more "integrated and connected" (page 64). They also highlighted the importance of education for global citizenship, including around environmental issues and that this should be an integral school subject.

MSS also highlighted their work with 43 local community youth councils in order to be inclusive of young people in rural and remote areas. They have expressed a keen desire to be included in decision-making processes, including those related to pension and health systems. The Youth Council noted the Governments strong commitment to multi-stakeholder partnership, including with youth.

Finally, **the report also made reference to a "children's parliament" as an example of good practice in engaging children in primary school.** The pupils of each school appoint a delegation that represents them in the municipal children's parliament. The municipal children's parliament then appoints a delegation for the regional children's parliament, where they represent the interests of their peers at the national children's parliament, which takes place in the hall of the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia (page 27).

In several parts of the report, Slovenia mentioned the importance of education on sustainable development for children and youth and for engaging young people in global citizenship and civic participation. It is clear that Slovenia is prioritizing child and youth engagement in their local SDG implementation efforts.

See full report: [Slovenia: Voluntary National Review on the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda: Report to the UN High Level Political Forum 2017 on Sustainable Development](#)



SWEDEN

Sweden noted their intent to be a leader on implementation of the 2030 Agenda both domestically and globally. They have placed partnership and inclusion at the center of effectively implementation of the SDGs, noting that "Sweden is working for increased cooperation and new partnerships between countries, business, the social partners, civil society organisations and the knowledge-based society in different parts of the world."

Sweden did specifically mention engaging with "young civil society" as part of this process, stating "through partnerships and holistic solutions, young people bring the 2030 Agenda to life and show that initiatives of the young civil society are particularly important in the work for sustainable development. However, the representatives also point to growing problems of threats and expressions of hatred" (page 85). The report noted the contributions of UNICEF Sweden in [an additional document of examples of good practice](#) submitted to the HLPF, noting "they provide information about and collect money that is used in development and emergency relief work conducted by UNICEF globally, in line with SDG 17, primarily 17.3 concerning the mobilisation of additional financial resources for developing countries. UNICEF Sweden also works to ensure compliance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child through the moulding of public opinion."

With Sweden being a high-income country, many development challenges plaguing lower and middle income countries are not major issues for Sweden, but many of their domestic interventions do look at issues of equity in the country, including a focus on children in many such interventions.

The Government intends to design an overarching and national action plan for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. In March 2016, a national delegation was appointed whose commission included drafting a proposal for an action plan. This proposal was presented on 1 June 2017. The report notes "A particularly interesting and challenging task is to produce and adopt integrated indicators, taking into account the links between the various goals and targets. Existing follow-up systems and specified goals, such as the environmental objectives system, the public health targets and the new welfare metrics, yield great advantages that will be harnessed. These existing goals and processes are an important starting point for Sweden's implementation of the 2030 Agenda" (page 7).

On Goal 1, Sweden notes they do not have a national definition of poverty but use an EU measure of the "proportion of the population that has a disposable income lower than 60 per cent of the national median income" and that 15% of the Swedish population is below this threshold. Poverty in the sense of a low disposable income occurs to the highest degree among women over the age of 65, single women with children, people with disabilities and persons born outside Sweden. To mitigate, the Government highlighted that for everyone living or working in Sweden, public social insurance protection creates security and counteracts

economic vulnerability and that "a fundamental ambition is to create conditions for all children to grow up on equal terms, to increase gender equality and to promote social cohesion and economic growth" (page 18).

On Goal 2, although hunger and malnutrition are not issues in Sweden, there are risks with increasing overweight and obesity, including among youth (16-29 years old).

In terms of health/SDG 3, "the challenges for Sweden lie in taking measures for health equity, including the reduction of disparities in health and well-being between different groups in society and improving quick and equal access to healthcare for all who are in need of it. Furthermore, unhealthy eating habits is one of the greatest risk factors for ill-health and premature death in Sweden. There are also particular challenges regarding differences in both mental and physical health between different groups of the population, mainly between people with different levels of education and depending on gender. Furthermore, there are differences regarding these factors between LGBT persons, people with disabilities, foreign-born persons, national minorities and indigenous peoples, and the population as a whole. The Government's goal is to eliminate avoidable health inequalities within a generation. The Commission for Equity in Health was appointed in 2015 with the task of producing proposals that might contribute to the reduction of health disparities in society" (page 22).

On Goal 4, "Primary, lower secondary and upper secondary school is free of charge, and attendance at primary and lower secondary school is compulsory. Postsecondary education is also free of charge. Access to university and university college studies, without an upper age limit, creates a lifelong opportunity for higher education (page 23). However, the challenges include increasing the equivalence of schools, increasing the number of qualified teachers, improving the quality of teaching, raising the level of learning outcomes and ensuring that education and learning environments are accessible and are able to include all students on the basis of their needs and conditions.

Although Sweden strives to be a peaceful society, they have acknowledges challenges remain in eliminating various forms of violence, including violence against children. **Sweden is one of ten pathfinder countries in the [Global Partnership to End Violence against Children](#) launched in 2016** (page 39). A national survey with grade 9 students in Sweden indicated that 20% of respondents had been subjected to some form of physical or psychological assault, or to neglect or had witnessed violence in the home. Children with disabilities are particularly vulnerable.

Sweden is very committed to issues of environmental sustainability and preservation of natural resources. A specific references to children in this space noted the Government has adopted an action plan for a toxic-free everyday environment. The action plan runs for the period 2011–2020 and entails the use of measures to reduce exposure to hazardous substances in the everyday environment, with a particular focus on children (page 34)

Sweden is currently in the process of creating a law based on the [Convention on the Rights of the Child](#).

See full report: [Sweden and the 2030 Agenda: Report to the UN High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development](#)



TAJIKISTAN

Tajikistan is a small, mountainous, land-locked country of 8.7 million people, of which 49% of the population is under 18 and 66% are under the age of 30.

Tajikistan noted investments in youth as a means to capitalize on the demographic dividend will accelerate progress on the SDGs, but did not specifically mention investing in children (page 29).

As Tajikistan works towards nationalizing the SDGs, the Government identified two overarching priorities as also identified in their *National Development Strategy 2030 (NDS 2030)*: 1) ensure energy security and efficient use of electricity; and 2) ensure food security and people's access to good quality nutrition. Other SDG related targets are also reflected in the VNR as cross-sectorial issues: gender equality, industrialization, access to water and climate change. The Government conducted a series of consultations at the national and regional level, with the broad participation of stakeholders: governmental experts, including sectorial and local level specialists, UN agencies, and parliament members, civil society, academia, entrepreneurs and media, as well as representatives of the development partners in Tajikistan. The Government highlighted, "more active participation of the civil society and broader audience towards SDGs as well as their engagement into the implementation and tracking outcomes will also be critical" and that attracting "young people" will be particularly important (page 32).

On Goal 1, the Government notes that the national poverty rate has declined from 83% (2000) to 30.3 (2016). Tajikistan also looks at the issue of multidimensional poverty. The multidimensional poverty index (MPI) shows that about 7.8% of the population at the national level live at the level of multidimensional poverty, and the vulnerability to multidimensional poverty reaches more than 20% (7.6% and 25% in urban and rural areas, respectively) (page 9). The issue of child poverty was not explicitly addressed.

On Goal 2, the Government noted they are improving food security and quality safe nutrition, "by developing the necessary measures to improve access of households to food, strengthening of social assistance and child nutrition programs, forming a state food reserve and the state food grain fund" (page 20). However challenges remain, where the report notes "medical-demographic research conducted in the country showed that 26% of children under the age of 5 years are characterized by short stature (stunted), 16% by lightweight, and 9% by emaciation. 24.2% of women of fertile age and 28.8% of children aged 6 weeks to 5 years suffer from anemia, and 52.9% from iodine deficiency" (page 21). Malnutrition is a major factor in child mortality in Tajikistan.

On Goal 3, the reported noted a decrease in infant, child and maternal mortality, but slower than necessary (page 13).

On Goal 4, the report notes that 99% of children attend primary school but that work needs to be done to increase the number of pre-schools and that "many students do not attend secondary schools regularly, especially in winter period, when lots of problems arise due to the lack of transportation means, central heating and electricity cuts in schools" (page 23).

Tajikistan intends to focus on leaving no one behind by looking as disaggregated data, SDG localization and meeting the needs of specific population groups including "women, children and elderly people, rural communities and people with disabilities" (page 27).

See full report: [Improving Living Standards through Mainstreaming of Sustainable Development Policy in Tajikistan](#)



THAILAND

Thailand's work on the SDGs is guided by the concept of Sufficiency Economy Philosophy (SEP), the core principle of *National Economic and Social Development Plan* since 2002. SEP and the SDGs have been integrated in the *20- Year National Strategy Framework* and the *12th National Economic and Social Development Plan (2017 – 2021)*. As a result, plans and budgeting of all government agencies will be in line with SEP and SDGs.

Thailand established a National Committee for Sustainable Development (CSD) which is chaired by the Prime Minister. It has 37 members from public, private academia and civil society, with the Secretary-General of National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB) as the secretariat. Three subcommittees focus on mobilizing the SDGs, raising awareness on sustainable development and the application of SEP, and compiling data and statistics to support the implementation and monitoring of the 2030 Agenda. **Thailand explicitly noted the importance of engaging youth in the area of increasing awareness and fostering ownership of the SDGs.**

Thailand reviewed all SDGs as part of their VNR process.

On goal 1, Thailand has made significant strides in reducing the percentage of people living in poverty from 42.3 per cent (25.3 million persons) in 2000 to 7.2 percent (4.8 million persons) in 2015. Thailand did disaggregate by gender and age and noted that of the 4.8 million persons living in poverty, 24% are children. Thailand noted that poverty encompasses multiple and diverse dimensions of deprivation. With SEP at the center of their poverty reduction strategy, Thailand has created 878 SEP model villages which seek to increase income, reduce expenditure and promote community welfare for those in the rural areas (page 8). The Government targets poor and vulnerable families with a provision of 6,000 Baht (approximately 171.43 USD) per month childcare subsidy for poor families with child aged 0-3.

On Goal 2, the Government reports that the number of undernourished persons in Thailand had declined from 19.8 million (34.60 per cent of the population) in 1990 – 1992 to 5 million (7.4 per cent of the population) in 2014 – 2016. The 20-Year National Strategy on Healthcare targets undernourished women and young children -- including through conducting activities at the local and community levels. The *Milk Code* encourages breastfeeding rather than other substitutes. In 2016, the 9th National Health Assembly put forward a policy to promote young children's health by putting an emphasis on the right nutrition during the first 2,500 days after birth as well as age specific development and enhanced reading skills.

On Goal 3, over 99 percent of babies are delivered with a skilled birth attendant and the maternal mortality ratio (MMR) is 24.6 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births, and the Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) and the under-five mortality rate are at 3.5 and 8.6 per 1000 live birth respectively.

The report highlights, "The Ministry of Public Health has implemented action plans to develop the quality of health services to be provided to citizens, such as the maternal health care policy which provides quality

pregnancy starting with a 5-time antenatal care to ensure pregnancy quality, setting up plans for quality delivery room and offering 3 times follow-up care after delivery. The infant care policy and the maternal health care policy provides knowledge to the mother on how to take care of herself during pregnancy, and how to properly take care of her child after delivery" (page 14) and that since 2002 Thailand has implemented universal health coverage including for documented and undocumented immigrant workers.

On Goal 4, Thailand notes that the Government provides free pre-primary, primary and secondary education and as of 2015, 76.2 per cent of children between the age of 3- 5 in Thailand had access to quality early childhood education, including public and private education institutions, as well as child development centers. The report showcased some of the work done on reaching vulnerable children with quality education including children with disabilities, children of ethnic groups, children in marginalized groups, migrant children and homeless children.

On Goal 5, Thailand adopted the *Gender Equality Act of 2015*, though the Government acknowledged that challenges remain with issues of adolescent pregnancy and unequal sharing of the burden of household tasks and caregiving responsibilities. Thailand is working with UN Women and other partners to study the issue of violence against women and children in the country.

On Goal 6, the Government notes that nearly 100 percent of households have access to safe and affordable drinking water as well as sanitation facilities. Thailand's main challenges under Goal 6 are access to safe drinking water in accordance with WHO's Guidelines for drinking-water quality (GDWQ) in rural areas and access to proper toilet facilities in remote and rural areas. Additional challenges include methodology for collecting agricultural, industrial and household water usage data; development of a roadmap and target setting for enhancing water use efficiency; and ensuring sustainable use of freshwater and freshwater biomes (page 24)

On Goal 16, Thailand is working with UNICEF to enhance knowledge and expertise in child protection in the judicial process and so that children and youth are able "to receive legal protection, as well as live sustainably under good governance and rule of law" (page 56). Thailand has also identified the issue of human trafficking as a national priority with a special focus on vulnerable groups such as women and children. Thailand has worked with UNICEF to increase children registered at birth which is estimated to be as high as 99%. **At the village/community level, Thailand highlighted an initiative called *Happy Village based on 9 Virtues* which aims to specifically address targets 16.2 (End abuse, exploitations, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children) and 16.5 (Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms).**

Other key references include the importance of addressing climate change and enhancing public understanding and awareness, especially among children and youth.

See full report: [Thailand's Voluntary National Review on the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#)



TOGO

Togo carried out a participatory process, noting that in preparing the VNR several awareness and outreach activities were conducted, including national and regional training workshops. A meeting for the exchange and sharing of information with all stakeholders (central and decentralized administration, civil society, private sector, development partners), was held. The meeting served to explain the underlying mechanism behind the HLPF and to present the scope of the report and its formulation process. The Government noted that awareness campaigns specifically targeting the Togolese youth have been organized throughout the territory (page 12).

Togo is integrating the SDGs into their *2018 National Development Plan (NDP)*. Sixty priority targets were identified and grouped together as part of the NDP. The five strategic axes are: (i) improve the well-being of the people and enable them to fulfil their potential; (ii) improve the productivity and competitiveness of the growth sectors; (iii) strengthen infrastructure that supports growth; (iv) ensure sustainable management of the territory, environment and living conditions, and (v) strengthen governance and consolidate peace (page 14).

In their VNR, Togo choose to focus specifically on the Goals receiving in-depth review at the HLPF in 2017: Goal 1 (No poverty); Goal 2 (Zero Hunger); Goal 3 (Good Health and Well-being); Goal 5 (Gender Equality); Goal 9 (Innovation and Infrastructure) and Goal 14 (Life under water).

Even though the Education Goal (SDG 4) was not up for review, Togo noted in their report that issues of "inequality and social exclusion can best be addressed through education and training" and that the Government had adopted free education since 2008 and also works with UNICEF on "school canteen programmes" aimed at ensuring students receive proper food and nutrition and this stay in school.

On Goal 1, extreme poverty stands at a rate of 28.7% in 2015 and that poverty remains high in rural areas (68.9%). Extreme poverty also increased in Lomé from 4.6% in 2011 to 13.7% in 2015. The Government noted one of their social protection whereby 5% of families with children receive a family allowance. A cash transfer fund, the *National Fund for Inclusive Financing (FNFI)*, is specifically targeting families with children 0-24 months and 25-59 months with severe malnutrition and pregnant women. Access to potable water is increasing, though only 64.4% (rural), 46.4% (peri-urban) and 52% (urban) populations currently have access (page 18). The explicit issue of child poverty was not addressed.

On Goal 2, the Government noted that Togo had been affected by the global food crisis but reiterated the mitigating programmes to address this including school feeding programmes and cash transfers to pregnant women and families with malnourished children (page 20).

On Goal 3, it was noted that 50% of the population does not use health facilities. Since 2011, the Government has initiated a comprehensive reform in health financing which led to the establishment of a mandatory national health insurance scheme. However, there are more rooms for improvement to guarantee universal access to quality and free health services especially for the poor and the vulnerable (page 25).

The Togo Government acknowledged **"the fight against infant and child mortality has not yielded much results between 2013 and 2015" and in fact, there has been a decrease in the number of children between the ages of 12 and 13 months receiving 3 pentavalent doses. The figure has moved from 92% in 2011 to 87.5% in 2015"** (page 26).

The Government identified the following challenges/issues for the health system that need to be improved or addressed "(i) decentralization of health services; (ii) reduction of inequalities among regions and within regions and social categories in terms of the provision and access to health services; (iii) inequality in the geographical distribution of human resources ; (iv) limited health trainings sessions, (v) insufficiency of financing allocated to the health sector and (vi) improvement in the management of health facilities" (page 26)

Despite these challenges, **the Government highlighted some efforts to improve child health and nutrition with support from UNICEF through the "Enhanced Child Health Day" campaign.** In 2016, an integrated package of high-impact interventions (vitamin A supplementation, deworming and child vaccination) was piloted in the Savannah and Kara regions. It is expected that the project will be expanded to other regions and the Government noted both the benefit to these children as well as the economic dividend for the country, stating "one dollar invested in nutrition, brings 15-20 dollar return to the country later. Nutrition is therefore not a cost but a long term investment" (page 27).

On Goal 5, the Government adopted the *National Gender Equity and Equality Policy (PNEEG)* which includes a focus on (i) enhancement of the social position and the potentials of women in the community; (ii) the improvement of the productive capacities of women and their levels of revenue; (iii) the promotion of equitable access to social services for women and men; (iv) the promotion of equal participation of women and men in power management; (v) elimination of gender based violence and (vi) institutional capacity building for agencies in charge of the implementation of the PNEEG (page 28). Issues of child marriage or FGM/C were not explicitly addressed in the report.

See full report: [High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development: Togo Country Report](#) (Also in [French](#))



URUGUAY

Uruguay reports significant progress in recent years regarding the well-being of their population, including **adopting a series of public policies taking an integral view of human rights, including the rights of children and adolescents.**

The report particularly focused on the Goals receiving in-depth review at the HLPF in 2017: Goal 1 (No poverty); Goal 2 (Zero Hunger); Goal 3 (Good Health and Well-being); Goal 5 (Gender Equality); Goal 9 (Innovation and Infrastructure) and Goal 14 (Life under water). Additionally, Uruguay including a chapter on Goal 16 (Peace, Justice and Accountable Institutions).

Uruguay also included an annex to the report on how they consulted with other stakeholders on the SDGs, which included government, civil society, the private sector, academia and international organizations.

The report has several useful references to children including a significant focus on early childhood and adolescence. For example, Uruguay has adopted *El Plan Nacional de Primera Infancia, Infancia y Adolescencia 2016-2020*, which seeks to specify and deepen the defined guidelines in *la Estrategia Nacional para la Infancia y la Adolescencia (2010-2030)*. It is structured around six pillars: 1) to ensure integral development through the promotion, prevention, treatment and rehabilitation in health; 2) guarantee continuous educational trajectories for development and social inclusion; 3) to prevent, detect and respond to different types of violence; 4) to reduce situations of special vulnerability: street children, child labor, children in conflict with the law, children living in institutional care; 5) promote participation, social interaction and access to cultural and artistic assets; 6) ensure access to justice (page 97-98).

Uruguay reports that a lot of their work on social protection measures aimed to reduce poverty are focused on children, adolescents and the elderly. They highlighted a few key programmes including: *Uruguay Crece Contigo*, a programme to improve child development outcomes starting with prenatal support up to the first four years of a child's life and *Jóvenes en Red*, a programme to reach out of school youth with employment and housing opportunities. *Uruguay Crece Contigo* has resulted in, for example, 40% of children under 2 improving their weight-to-age ratio and developmental disorders reduced from 22% to 17% (page 54).

Uruguay also showcased some of its work in improving nutrition through school feeding programmes and working with families through early education centers, guidance on parenting practices and focused on the psychosocial well-being of mothers and their access to social benefits (page 65). That being said, there are still 28.4% of children living in households with mild food security and 4.4% facing severe food insecurity.

On the flip side, alarmingly, Uruguay has noted a strong uptick in the sales of sugary drinks between 1999 and 2013, resulting in rates of the population being overweight or obese also rising. In Uruguay, 39% of children and adolescents are currently classified as overweight and cases of hypertension in early years are increasing. A law to promote health eating in schools was passed in 2013 with the intent to help children and adolescents make more nutritious food choices and increase physical activity (page 99).

Uruguay has noted the strong link between poverty and adolescent pregnancy in the country, which has lifelong consequences for girls who then leave school and are unable to find decent work. The Government is working to address this issue through *la Estrategia intersectorial de prevención del embarazo no intencional en adolescentes* adopted in September 2016.

Uruguay is looking towards ways to end domestic violence, including against women, girls and children.

Uruguay has a law since 2007 prohibiting physical punishment of children and adolescents (page 96) and also highlighted *el Sistema Integral de Protección a la Infancia y a la Adolescencia contra la Violencia* (page 212)

Uruguay is also committed to helping women with the burden of family care through *Sistema Nacional Integrado de Cuidados (SNIC)* which aims to increase the supply of care services throughout the country and promote the co-responsibility of care between women and men (page 131).

Finally **Uruguay mentioned work in the area of child participation**, noting the law: *Consejo Nacional Consultivo Honorario de los Derechos del Niño y Adolescente* (National Honorary Consultative Council of the Rights of Children and Adolescents) as a vehicle to promote this (page 221).

See full report: [Informe Nacional Voluntario -- Uruguay 2017](#)



ZIMBABWE

Zimbabwe took a 3-pronged approach to development their VNR: a desk review of relevant policy documents, complemented by a trend analysis for the indicators; interviews with key stakeholders including government, development agencies, private sector, civil society organizations and youth groups (page 11); and circulation of key messages and draft report to a SDG technical committee for feedback. In their VNR, Zimbabwe choose to focus specifically on the Goals receiving in-depth review at the HLPF in 2017: Goal 1 (No poverty); Goal 2 (Zero Hunger); Goal 3 (Good Health and Well-being); Goal 5 (Gender Equality); Goal 9 (Innovation and Infrastructure) and Goal 14 (Life under water).

Zimbabwe also reports a public awareness campaign on the SDGs "through mass media including live radio and TV programmes, engagement with youth, journalists, private sector, young entrepreneurs, university students and civil society" (page 14). UNICEF also supported the Government in this endeavor, running a U-report poll to gauge public awareness, knowledge and perceptions of SDGs (page 53).

A national youth taskforce *Youth4SDGs*, brought together over 100 youth organizations across 10 provinces "to provide strategic direction for youth inclusion and participation in the implementation and monitoring of the SDGs" (page 14). The coalition also aims to educate youth about the importance of the SDGs in their own lives and communities.

Another youth engagement initiative highlighted was an *SDG Lecture Series in Universities*. It aims "to raise awareness and to encourage active engagement by providing the opportunity for students and the local academic community to engage with the UN or experts on SDGs of particular relevance to their respective universities and to Zimbabwe at large. To date, the lecture series has reached some 3,000 students and staff in different Universities. The UN in Zimbabwe also supported a training of trainers on SDGs for 120 young people to empower them to mobilise themselves and take up proactive initiatives towards achieving SDGs" (page 14).

The Government has prioritized ending multidimensional poverty for the people of Zimbabwe and explicitly reported on child poverty rates in their VNR. They are specifically focused on reducing extreme poverty in the most vulnerable households and reducing poverty-related abuse, neglect and violence against children through the launch of *the 3rd phase of the National Action Plan for Orphans and Vulnerable Children (NAP3)*. **This is done in partnership with UNICEF.** Though progress on reducing child poverty has been made, the government is still reporting that "of the 6.3 million children in Zimbabwe, 78 per cent (4.8 million) live in consumption poverty and 26 per cent (1.6 million) live in extreme / food poverty" (page 19).

In terms of the specific goal areas, the Government is reporting reductions in under-5 mortality, stunting and recently passed a law on ending child marriage in line with their commitments to uphold the *Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)* and the *African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child*. Zimbabwe is part of the *Zero Hunger Challenge*, the *Scaling up Nutrition (SUN) Initiative* and has set up a *Standing Cabinet Committee on Food and Nutrition Security* chaired by the Vice President. Through the *Participatory Health and Hygiene*

Education (PHHE) in Mutoko under their '14 Small Towns Wash Programme (STWP), UNICEF has also supported the Government to improve equitable use of safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene practices (page 37).

The Government has developed the *National Health Strategy for Zimbabwe 2016-2020* which seeks to achieve 'Equity and Quality in Health: Leaving no one behind.' The Strategy is anchored by four priority areas: communicable diseases; non-communicable diseases (NCDs); reproductive, maternal, new-born, child and adolescents; and public health surveillance and disaster preparedness and response (page 24).

Although the Government entitles every citizen and permanent resident of Zimbabwe to a basic state-funded education, they have noted challenges in the areas of inadequate school infrastructure, including inadequate Early Child Development (ECD) facilities, science laboratories, libraries, electricity, computers, water and sanitation among others.

See full report: [Zimbabwe Voluntary National Review \(VNR\) of SDGs for the High Level Political Forum.](#)